the weekly Standard

JULY 30, 2007 $3.95

FIGHTING AL QAEDA IN IRAQ
THOMAS JOSCELYN

The 9/11 Generation

BETTER THAN THE BOOMERS BY DEAN BARNETT

STRONG AMERICANS BY MICHAEL FUMENTO

THE LEFT TRASHES THE TROOPS BY WILLIAM KRISTOL

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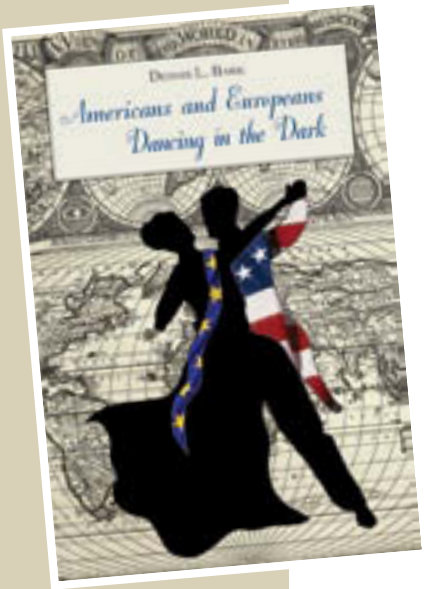

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Dennis L. Bark, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, is a historian and political scientist in the field of European studies.

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Feinstein's Guantánamo Prison Blues

Dianne Feinstein is sponsoring an amendment to next year's defense authorization bill that would force the president to close the terrorist detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within one year and restrict the executive's authority to transfer the detainees to brigs outside the United States. The California Democrat and her 15 cosponsors in the Senate—including Nebraska Republican Chuck Hagel—would also require that the president submit to Congress a report providing "legal justification" for detaining "any individual" under the new, congressionally mandated policy.

You can expect a flurry of litigation and strengthened demands to treat terrorists (including those who are not U.S. citizens and are captured outside the United States) as common criminals—enjoying full Miranda rights and other constitutional protections—if the Feinstein amendment were to pass.

What The Scrapbook finds interesting is that just a few years ago, Feinstein had a different idea of how to deal with America's jihadist enemies, who are members of no army and who wear no uniform in battle. In interviews with reporters in early 2002, Feinstein voiced full support for the president's detention, interrogation, and Guantánamo policies. The Guantánamo detainees "are people, if you release them, they're going to go out and kill again," Feinstein told ABC News on January 28, 2002. The next day, in an article in the *Alameda Times-Star*, Feinstein said, "It's very important to be able to interrogate these prisoners."

The *Times-Star* reporter noted: "Feinstein also gave support to the Bush administration on the question of whether the prisoners [at Guantánamo] should be classified prisoners of war and covered under the Geneva Convention."

And then a day after that, the *New York Post* quoted Feinstein saying, "I'll be very candid with you. I would much rather be here"—that is, in Guantánamo—"in an 8 by 8 [foot] cell with a breeze, than locked down in Folsom prison in California. This is not an egregious situation."

Of course, the Feinstein amendment would require the president to move the detainees to places like Folsom prison—places that, five years ago, Feinstein thought were actually worse than the prison where the detainees are held currently. So what happened?

"My comments were made in January of 2002, shortly after the facility was opened," Feinstein said in a statement to The Scrapbook. "It was a very different time, and the comments are now out of date. The problem now is that many detainees have been held, in most cases without charge, for over five years under a lesser system of justice and with no hope of having their status clarified."

Yes, January 2002 was a very different time. It was back when most Democrats were still serious about fighting the war on terrorism. ♦

Harry Reid's Pajama Party

As political stunts go, Harry Reid's forcing the Senate to stay in session all night long July 17-18 to debate the Levin-Reed Amendment to the Defense Authorization Act was an uncommonly empty one. The amendment, which called for a precipitous withdrawal of troops and would hamstring the president's ability to fight the war in a responsible manner, was destined for failure and the majority leader knew it. But the Nevada Democrat was going to force every senator he could to come to the floor and debate the issue!

Except that he didn't. The debate started at 3 P.M. on Tuesday and ran through 11 A.M. Wednesday, but for most of that time the Senate floor was virtually empty. There was always at least one Republican and one Democrat on the floor in order to keep the "debate" from ending, but that was usually it. The pages and aides who lined the walls of the Senate waiting for the intermittent quorum calls outnumbered their bosses by a ratio of six or seven to one for almost the entire night.

And those quorum calls were *very* intermittent. After holding one around midnight, Reid then announced to the rest of the members of the Senate that there would not be another until 5 A.M. The Scrapbook's personal experience in all-nighters is fading, but if we recall our college years accurately, midnight to 5 A.M. would have counted as a good night's sleep. Those cots ostentatiously wheeled in by the leadership for a photo-op were unnecessary.

The only genuinely interesting moment was one Reid probably wishes he hadn't agreed to. Just after 9 P.M. he and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and a few other Democratic colleagues made their way from the steps of the senior chamber to Upper Senate Park, a small patch of grass hosting a rally sponsored by MoveOn.org, where

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of August 25 / September 1, 1997)

they were shouted down by Code Pink and assorted other leftists. ("Impeachment on the table!" "It was about oil!" "It's not enough!" went the cries.)

Finally, Reid had had enough: "Be quiet!" he snapped. And they did shut up. One has to wonder: After seeing the "debate" watched by no one but the six members of the press who stayed all night (including THE SCRAPBOOK's heroic colleague Sonny Bunch), and getting shouted down by his supporters, does Reid wish he had called it a night a few hours earlier? ♦

George Galloway, Scoundrel for Hire

Over the years we've leveled all sorts of charges against jihadists—murder, malevolence, stupidity, and even cowardice. But no jihadist ever has been found wanting in principles—wicked principles, yes, but principles, nevertheless.

Enter George Galloway, British MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, who seemed to be an ordinary, if flamboyant, brute. In 1994, in his unofficial capacity as Saddam Hussein's court jester, Galloway slobbered to the tyrant: "Sir, I salute your courage, your strength, your indefatigability. And I want you to know that we are with you until victory, until victory, until Jerusalem."

And Galloway did stick with Saddam—not until Jerusalem, but at least until the Iraqi dictator was hanged. As jihad's podium patriot, Galloway traveled the world doing his best to inflame terrorists and incite suicide attacks. On Al Jazeera TV in 2005, he announced to the Arab world: "Two of your beautiful daughters are in the hands of foreigners—Jerusalem and Baghdad. The foreigners are doing to your daughters as they will. The daughters are crying for help, and the Arab world is silent."

But it seems, more and more, that Galloway is not an authentic rebel for the terrorist cause—which would be bad enough—but a mercenary out for a buck. This son of Dundee, Scotland, has been putting his mouth where the money is.

Last Wednesday the House of Commons suspended the MP for "concealing the true source of Iraqi funding" for the Mariam Appeal, a Galloway "charity" founded in 1998 to combat U.N. sanctions placed on Saddam's Iraq. The decision confirmed the 2005 findings of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, led by Minnesota senator Norm Coleman, which found that Britain's no-blood-for-oil dove had actually received the profits from 23 million barrels of oil from Saddam Hussein, who had skimmed it from the U.N.'s Oil-for-Food Program.

Galloway remains in denial, saying that "these highly damaging allegations have caused my reputation severe damage which needs to be repaired." There are few things that would damage a jihadist cheerleader's reputation, you might think, but an allegation of prostitution may well be one. ♦

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Casual

Death of a Salesman

"You ought to talk to your publisher," said the radio host. "They're really overselling you."

She was the substitute host of a high-rated show out west, and as I took my seat in her studio I didn't want to seem like a rube—like a superannuated author on his first book tour, which is, however, what I am—so I just said, "They are?"

"Yeah," she said, holding up a sheaf of promotional material. "Every bit of publicity your publisher writes and sends out about your book—it all says, 'Amusing, witty, laugh-out-loud funny, et cetera, et cetera.' But the thing is, it isn't funny."

"It isn't?" I said.

"Not at all. I'm reading it over the weekend and I'm like, 'They said this was funny!' I'm like, 'Jeez, this is really serious.' A few good lines, I guess. But not funny. At all. Tell your publisher."

"I will," I said.

"Frankly, I'm not so sure we would've had you on if we'd known. "

"Really?"

"Headphones!" she cried suddenly, sitting bolt upright. "On air in ten seconds!"

Let me be clear: I'm not complaining. This was not the worst thing that happened to me over the last several weeks, as I humped my way from city to city trying to force people to buy this book I've written. About the early morning flights with the sting still fresh from the previous evening's nightcap(s)—I'll complain about those. And the surly skycaps—I'll complain about them. The traffic jams that freeze the downtown of every city in America, the cluelessness of rental car clerks, the hallucinatory illogic of airport security—believe me, there's no end to my bitching.

But about the stone-headed radio host? I will not complain. I don't dare complain. The reason is simple if not entirely honorable. I've been transformed from a mild-mannered hack, whose deskbound livelihood entails typing and making phone calls, into a traveling salesman, tirelessly hawking a product. And as a salesman I have assumed a posture of total sycophancy toward anyone who can help me move units.

Salesman is not a role I'm cut out for. For one thing, I have until now been able to arrange my life in such a way as to avoid the professional activity I dislike above all others—speaking before an audience of my fellow human beings—and it turns out that selling a book involves a nearly endless series of events which require me to speak to an audience.

Nevertheless, I have managed to turn this shortcoming of mine into a little joke that I use at the beginning of my talks: "I wanted to be a writer," I say, "so I wouldn't have to be a talker," which serves to lower the audience's expectations and also elicits a mild laugh, which in turn relaxes me a little bit. Xanax helps too.

But not always. Speaking at bookstores is a particularly nerve-racking form of the art. It occurs at very close quarters: usually in a nook tucked amid the stacks, with folding chairs arrayed in a semicircle mere inches before the podium. The front row is so close that if the speaker fainted—always a risk in my case—he would fall into someone's lap.

Such intimacy means no sign of weakness escapes notice; every wobble of the author's voice is picked up, every quiver of the hand is seen. I gave my first talk on a warm June evening, and the temperature in the store rose to the high eighties. I was two minutes into my talk when the first drop of perspiration fell. When I was halfway through, it seemed as though a puffy little rain cloud had settled over the podium, releasing a gentle shower onto my handwritten notes and making them all but illegible. I glanced briefly up at the audience and saw a young woman turn to her date and wipe her brow with a theatrical back of her hand.

But I'm not complaining. I have yet to faint. For the most part, the radio interviewers have been friendly and not stupid. Even better, with only two exceptions I have been spared the humiliation of arriving at a bookstore for a reading only to find that no one has bothered to show up to hear me. On one such occasion the store owner took such pity that she insisted on occupying a front-row seat herself, as a way of encouraging others in the store to join her. It worked. Before too long three or four customers sat down too. "One reason I wanted to be a writer," I said, "was that I wouldn't have to be a talker."

She laughed and laughed, and within three minutes she was completely asleep—lost in mouth-gaping, adenoid-exposing, head-rolling slumber. But I'm not complaining.

Andrew Ferguson

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Silver Screen Stalinists

Stephen Schwartz may be optimistic that the blacklist mythology is fading from modern memory, but I am less sure ("Modern Mythology," July 9). On July 4, Turner Classic Movies ran the movie musical *1776*, whose cast included Howard Da Silva—whom, Robert Osborne (the evening TCM host) gravely reminded us, was a blacklisted actor. Four days later, TCM screened Gore Vidal's 1964 political drama *The Best Man*, with John Henry Faulk in a minor role, and the daytime host, Ben Mankiewicz, earnestly told us that he too was a blacklist victim. I must admit that knowing about Faulk's red past added zest to my moviewatching, as Faulk gave a scene-stealing performance as a George Wallace clone, segregationist governor T.T. Claypoole. Films like *1776* and *The Best Man* are rich in interesting side details, and we might hear about them too, if only those TCM hosts would give up their blacklist fixation.

Joanne Butler
Alexandria, Va.

Would Mikey Like It?

Regarding John Podhoretz's "Reverend Mike" (July 9): One wonders if triple-chinned filmmaker Michael Moore, when his own arteries finally clog shut from trying to personally rid the world of donuts, will seriously consider a Cuban hospital for his bypass surgery? Or will a road-to-Damascus experience bring him to reconsider the sour views on American health care propagandized in *Sicko*? My wager is that he'll opt for the very best surgeon that privilege can buy, along with a private hospital suite, armed security guards, and media handlers primed to spin away the irony.

Ron Gooden
Atlanta, Ga.

Childish Observations

Roger Kimball's "Boys Will Be . . . " (June 25 / July 2) has an ironic undercurrent: Kimball tacitly assumes the very psychological theories that inspire political correctness. *The Dangerous Book for Boys* may be a clever creation and a service to children, but it's hard to see how a single children's book could be the decisive culture-war white knight that Kimball makes it out to be. The book's mundane remarks on gender differences and its focus on courage could only be that revolutionary if children are permanently and sweepingly shaped by what they read. If Kimball assumes this, it's easy to picture him as a prissy legislator of political correctness, only with a different definition of the term—it's still a matter of supreme importance what Johnny reads about gender, though Kimball would have Johnny consume a different dogma. Personally, I have a bit more faith in human nature. Young boys (and girls) are cunning creatures, too shrewd to be taken in for life by the remarks of a single book.

Robert Friel
Seattle, Wash.

Treacherous Words

Regarding Paul Hollander's "Book of Memories" (July 9): Hollander's powerful attack on the translation from Hungarian into English of George Konrád's *A Guest in My Own Country* confirms the Italian punning phrase, "traduttori, traditori," that is, translators are traitors.

Arnold Beichman
Stanford, Calif.

Don't Laugh at Leprosy

Joe Queenan's "No Amnesty for Lepers" (July 16) left me puzzled. In the first paragraph Queenan mentions that there are 7,000 cases of leprosy in the United States, according to Lou Dobbs. At first, I thought it was a parody—but on your last page, you always label a parody as such. Must be satire, I figured, but in this age of correctness, who would dare use leprosy for humor? So just to be sure, I called the Centers for Disease Control and was told that their latest report on leprosy recorded 96 cases in 2002. Based on this (partial) information from the CDC, I decided the article was indeed satire—which can be a dangerous thing. Swift's *A Modest Proposal* led to thousands of infants being baked, fried, boiled, broiled, or fricasseed in Ireland before word got out that it was only satire. One can't be too careful.

James G. Baird
Woodstock, Ga.

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IT'S 2007, NOT 1977

Don't let Congress bring back failed energy tax policies from the 1970s

The 1970s was a bad decade for fashion, hairstyles and, especially, energy policy.

The '70s brought Americans gasoline price controls, energy taxes and similar policies that led to gasoline shortages, long lines at the pump and double-digit inflation.

So it's puzzling why some in Congress want to bring back 1970s energy policies. They're pushing the same kind of legislation that was so disastrous 30 years ago: new taxes that will restrict energy research, exploration and development – even a blast-from-the-past "windfall profits" tax.

These misguided policy relics will reduce access to energy supplies here at home – all at a time when Americans need more energy, not less. It's time for Congress to focus on securing America's energy future, not bringing back America's energy past.

Tell Congress: It's 2007, not 1977.

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They Don't Really Support the Troops

Cindy Sheehan, mother of a soldier who was killed in Iraq, emerged on the American political scene two years ago. Distraught and unstable, she was shamelessly exploited by opponents of George W. Bush and the war while such exploitation seemed to pay political benefits. When she became an embarrassment, she, like others before her, was tossed onto the trash heap of history by her progressive minders.

Sheehan was useful to the antiwar left in a particular way. As Jonathan Cohn put it in the September 12, 2005, *New Republic*, "Sheehan's value isn't as a barometer of public opinion or as a source of foreign policy wisdom. It's as proof of one very simple point: that a person can criticize the war and still support the troops."

It's unclear that Sheehan was particularly interested in "supporting the troops"—unless one means by that lamenting the fate of the troops as victims. The fact that relatively few soldiers see themselves as victims, the fact that few families understand their loved ones' service and sacrifices in that light—that didn't matter. What mattered to the left was that it was dangerous politically not to "support the troops." Of course the antiwar left hated what the troops were doing, fighting the enemy in Iraq, and they hated the troops' goal, victory in Iraq. So "supporting the troops" meant feeling sorry for them, or pretending to—something antiwar politicians and media did with great hand-wringing and hoopla.

With the ongoing progress of the surge, and the obvious fact that the vast majority of the troops want to fight and win the war, the "support-the-troops-but-oppose-what-they're-doing" position has become increasingly untenable. How can you say with a straight face that you support the troops while advancing legislation that would undercut their mission and strengthen their enemies?

You can't. So those on the cutting edge of progressive opinion are beginning to give up on even pretending to support the troops. Instead, they now slander the troops.

At least the Nation *interviewed real soldiers on the record. The* New Republic, *in its July 23 issue, takes a different tack. Its slander of American soldiers appears to be fiction presented as fact, behind a convenient screen of anonymity.*

Two progressive magazines have taken complementary approaches in this effort. In its July 30 issue, the *Nation* has a 24-page article based on interviews with 50 Iraq veterans. The piece allegedly reveals "disturbing patterns of behavior by American troops in Iraq"—indeed, it claims that the war has "led many troops to declare an open war on all Iraqis." Needless to say, the anecdotal evidence in the article comes nowhere close to supporting this claim. There are a few instances of out-of-control behavior, some routine fog-of-war and brutality-of-war incidents, and much that is simply trivial. The picture is unpleasant, as one would expect—but it comes nowhere close to living up to the authors' billing: "The war the vets described is a dark and even depraved enterprise."

Since the *Nation* has held this view of every American war (except when we were fighting side-by-side with Stalin's Soviet Union), and loves nothing more than accounts of American war crimes, its story is no surprise. At least they interviewed real soldiers on the record. The *New Republic*, in its July 23 issue, takes a different tack. Its slander of American soldiers appears to be fiction presented as fact, behind a convenient screen of anonymity.

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A column entitled "Shock Troops" is said to be the work of "Scott Thomas"—"the pseudonym for a soldier currently serving in Baghdad." "Thomas" colorfully describes three sets of alleged misdeeds he and his buddies committed in Baghdad: They humiliate a woman in a military dining hall who has been disfigured in an IED explosion (the woman "wore an unrecognizable tan uniform, so I couldn't really tell whether she was a soldier or a civilian contractor"); they discover human remains and one private spends a day and night playing around with a child's skull ("which even had chunks of hair"), amusing his fellow soldiers; and one private routinely drives a Bradley Fighting Vehicle recklessly and uses the vehicle to kill stray dogs.

My colleague Michael Goldfarb raised questions about this account in a July 18 post on THE WEEKLY STANDARD website, asking for assistance from soldiers and veterans in assessing the truth of the stories told by "Scott Thomas." Within a day, dozens of active duty soldiers and veterans had come forward to point out errors, implausibility, and indeed the well-nigh-impossibility (in the case of the Bradley) of what was claimed. The editors of the *New Republic* provided to Goldfarb a couple of allegedly corroborating details—for example, the name of the Forward Operating Base, FOB Falcon, where the taunting of the badly disfigured female IED victim was said to have taken place. Soldiers who served at the base have come forward to say no such woman has been seen there. As we go to press on July 20, the *New Republic* has said they are investigating their own story, and the mainstream media seem to be hoping against hope that they won't have to cover yet another embarrassing episode of journalistic malpractice.

We at THE WEEKLY STANDARD are well aware that editors make mistakes. We have made our share. But what is revealing about this mistake is that the editors must have wanted to suspend their disbelief in tales of gross misconduct by American troops. How else could they have published such a farrago of dubious tales?

Having turned against a war that some of them supported, the left is now turning against the troops they claim still to support. They sense that history is progressing away from them—that these soldiers, fighting courageously in a just cause, could still win the war, that they are proud of their service, and that they will be future leaders of this country. They are not "Shock Troops." They are our best and bravest, fighting for all of us against a brutal enemy in a difficult and frustrating war. They are the 9/11 generation. The left slanders them. We support them. More than that, we admire them.

—William Kristol

National Institute Press™ Announces an Important New Book

AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY:

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF WILLIAM R. VAN CLEAVE

Edited by Bradley A. Thayer

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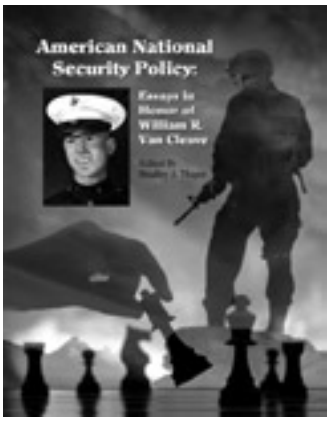

Few individuals have had as lasting an impact on American national security as William Van Cleave. This book honors William Van Cleave, who has served his country in many capacities: as a Marine, student, policymaker, strategist, professor, mentor, and American. The subjects addressed by the authors are diverse and include American missile defense policy, counterproliferation strategies, the role of space in the security of the United States, Russian nuclear doctrine, a consideration of the Department of Defense's budgetary process, how the United States should respond to the North Korean nuclear program, the nuclear doctrine of the United States, and strategy and counterintelligence. Implicitly and explicitly, they also provide some insight into how Van Cleave influenced so many individuals who have proceeded to serve the United States in the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, and in industry and universities.

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The 9/11 Generation

Better than the Boomers.

BY DEAN BARNETT

In the 1960s, history called the Baby Boomers. They didn't answer the phone.

Confronted with a generation-defining conflict, the cold war, the Boomers—those, at any rate, who came to be emblematic of their generation—took the opposite path from their parents during World War II. Sadly, the excesses of Woodstock became the face of the Boomers' response to their moment of challenge. War protests where agitated youths derided American soldiers as baby-killers added no luster to their image.

Few of the leading lights of that generation joined the military. Most calculated how they could avoid military service, and their attitude rippled through the rest of the century. In the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, military service didn't occur to most young people as an option, let alone a duty.

But now, once again, history is calling. Fortunately, the present generation appears more reminiscent of their grandparents than their parents.

I've spent much of the past two weeks speaking with young people (and a few not-so-young) who have made the decision to serve their country by volunteering for the military. Some of these men have Ivy League degrees; all of them are talented and intelligent individuals who—contrary to John Kerry's infamous "botched joke" ("Education, if you make the most of it, you study hard, you do your homework and you make an effort to be smart, you can do well. And if you don't, you get stuck in Iraq")—could have chosen to do anything with their lives. Having signed up, they have either gone to Iraq or look forward to doing so. Not surprisingly, the mainstream media have underreported their stories.

Associated Press / Nirmalendu Majumdar

Iowa State ROTC ceremony

One of the excesses of the 1960s that present-day liberals have disowned and disavowed since 9/11 is the demonization of the American military. While every now and then an unrepentant liberal like Charlie Rangel will appear on cable news and casually accuse U.S. troops of engaging in baby-killing in Iraq, the liberal establishment generally knows better. They "support" the American military—at least in the abstract, until it does anything resembling fighting a war.

In search of a new narrative, 21st-century liberals have settled on the "soldiers are victims" meme. Democratic senators (and the occasional Republican senator who's facing a tough reelection campaign) routinely pronounce their concern for our "children" in Iraq. One of the reasons John Kerry's "botched joke" resonated so strongly was that it fit the liberals' narrative. The Democratic party would have you believe that our soldiers are children or, at best, adults with few options: In short, a callous and mendacious administration has victimized the young, the gullible, and the hopeless, and stuck them in Iraq.

But this narrative is not just insulting to our fighting men and women, it is also grossly inaccurate.

Kurt Schlichter is a lieutenant colonel in the California National Guard. A veteran of the first Gulf war, he's now stateside and commands the 1-18th Cavalry, 462-man RSTA (Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition) squadron attached to the 40th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The last media representative he spoke with before I contacted him was a *New York Times* stringer who wanted Schlichter's help in tracking down guardsmen who were "having trouble because they got mobilized."

In describing his unit, Schlichter says, "Our mission is to operate far out in front of the main body of the brigade to find and keep in contact with the enemy, report on its activities, and call in air or artillery fire on it. We are very lightly armed—speed, stealth, and smarts are our best weapons—and our Cav scouts work out of humvees or on foot." Their squadron motto is "Swift and Deadly."

Colonel Schlichter talks about the soldiers he commands with unvarnished admiration. He has 20-year-olds serving under him who have earned combat badges. As to why these young men are willingly and eagerly putting themselves in harm's way, Schlichter flatly declares, "The direction comes from themselves. They like to be challenged."

One of the soldiers in Colonel Schlichter's 1-18th is 28-year-old Sergeant Joseph Moseley. The outline of

Dean Barnett blogs at HughHewitt.com.

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Moseley's story matches the liberal narrative of the "soldier victim." A junior college student, he served four years in the Army and then four years in the National Guard. During his stint in the Guard, Moseley got mobilized. He went to Iraq, where he had a portion of his calf muscle torn away by an IED. He has since returned to the United States and is undergoing a rigorous rehab program, which he describes as "not always going smoothly." It's virtually impossible that Sergeant Moseley will recover fully from his injuries.

Yet when asked about his time in Iraq, Moseley speaks with evident pride. He says the fact that he took the brunt of the IED's blow means he did his job. None of the men serving under him was seriously injured. When asked how he would feel about being characterized as a victim, Sergeant Moseley bristles. "I'm not a victim," he says. "It's insulting. That's what we signed up for. I knew what I was doing."

Tom Cotton is another soldier who knew what he was doing. When 9/11 occurred, Cotton was in his third year at Harvard Law School. Like most Americans, he was "shocked, saddened, and angered." Like many on that day, he made a promise to serve his country.

And Cotton meant it. After fulfilling the commitments he had already made, including clerking for a federal judge and going to work for a large Washington law firm, Cotton enlisted in the Army. He jokes that doing so came with a healthy six-figure pay cut.

Cotton enlisted for one reason: He wanted to lead men into combat. His recruiter suggested that he use the talents he had spent seven years developing at Harvard and join the JAG Corps, the Armed Forces' law firm. Cotton rejected that idea. He instead began 15 months of training that culminated with his deployment to Iraq as a 2nd lieutenant platoon leader with the 101st Airborne in Baghdad.

The platoon he led was composed of men who had already been in Baghdad for five months. Cotton knew that a new platoon leader normally undergoes a period of testing from his men. Because his platoon was patrolling "outside the wire" every day, there was no time for Cotton and his men to have such a spell. He credits what turned out to be a smooth transition to his platoon's noncommissioned officers, saying, "The troops really belong to the NCOs." After six months, Cotton and his platoon redeployed stateside.

While in Iraq, Cotton's platoon was awarded two Purple Hearts, but suffered no killed in action. His larger unit, however, did suffer a KIA. When I asked Cotton for his feelings about that soldier's death, the pain in his voice was evident. After searching for words, he described it as "sad, frustrating, angry—very hard, very hard on the entire company."

He then added some thoughts. "As painful as it was, the death didn't hurt morale," he said. "That's something that would have surprised me before I joined the Army. Everyone in the Infantry has volunteered twice—once for the Army, once for the Infantry. These are all grown men who all made the decision to face the enemy on his turf. The least you can do is respect them and what they're doing."

Now serving in the Army in Virginia, still enjoying his six-figure pay cut, Tom Cotton says he is "infinitely happy" that he joined the Army and fought in Iraq. "If I hadn't done it," he says, "I would have regretted it the rest of my life."

Regardless of their backgrounds, the soldiers I spoke with had a similar matter-of-fact style. Not only did all of them bristle at the notion of being labeled victims, they bristled at the idea of being labeled heroes. To a man, they were doing what they saw as their duty. Their self-assessments lacked the sense of superiority that politicians of a certain age who once served in the military often display. The soldiers I spoke with also refused to make disparaging comparisons between themselves and their generational cohorts who have taken a different path.

But that doesn't mean the soldiers were unaware of the importance of their undertaking. About a month ago, I attended the commissioning of a lieutenant in the Marine Corps. The day before his commissioning, he had graduated from Harvard. He didn't come from a military family, and it wasn't financial hardship that drove him into the Armed Forces. Don't tell John Kerry, but he studied hard in college. After his commissioning, this freshly minted United States Marine returned to his Harvard dorm room to clean it out.

As he entered the dorm in his full dress uniform, some of his classmates gave him a spontaneous round of applause. A campus police officer took him aside to shake his hand. His father observed, "It was like something out of a movie."

A few weeks after his commissioning, the lieutenant sent me an email that read in part:

> I remember when I was down at Quantico two summers ago for the first half of Officer Candidates School. The second to last day I was down there—"Family Day," incidentally—was the 7/7 bombings. The staff pulled us over and told us the news and then said that's basically why they're so hard on us down there: We're at war and will be for a long time, and the mothers of recruits at MCRD and at Parris Island right now are going to be depending on us one day to get their sons and daughters home alive.
>
> When I was in England last week, I talked to an officer in the Royal Navy who had just received his Ph.D. He was saying he thought the larger war would last 20-30 years; I've always thought a generation—mine in particular. Our highest calling: To defend our way of life and Western Civilization; fight for the freedom of others; protect our friends, family, and country; and give hope to a people long without it.

It is surely a measure of how far we've come as a society from the dark days of the 1960s that things like military service and duty and sacrifice are now celebrated. Just because Washington and Hollywood haven't noticed this generational shift doesn't mean it hasn't occurred. It has, and it's seismic. ♦

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Rudy's the One?

No, he's not Nixon.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Is Rudy Giuliani the political reincarnation of Richard Nixon? That was the argument former Bush speechwriter Michael Gerson made in a *Washington Post* column last week.

Leave aside the obvious facts that Nixon's presidency ended in disgrace more than 30 years ago, that times, societies, and politics change, and that different politicians capture the imagination of different constituencies in different ways. And leave aside the fact that Gerson incorrectly says Giuliani supports the "waterboarding" interrogation technique, even though Giuliani has said repeatedly since June that he does not think waterboarding is necessary in "aggressive" interrogations. In his column, Gerson offers three arguments for why Giuliani more closely resembles Nixon than the former New York City mayor's self-described hero and former boss, Ronald Reagan. The arguments don't add up.

The first is that Nixon was "a talented man without an ideological compass," and Gerson thinks Giuliani shows signs of being the same. The only evidence for this that Gerson offers is Giuliani's endorsement of Democrat Mario Cuomo over George Pataki in the 1994 New York gubernatorial race. But Giuliani's (wrongheaded) decision had more to do with his longstanding rivalry with Pataki and Pataki's patron, former New York senator Alfonse D'Amato, than ideology.

Though he doesn't mention it, that rivalry actually lends a little credence to Gerson's second argument, which is that "Giuliani's combativeness, on occasion, blurs into pettiness." But Gerson backs this assertion with no evidence, so one has to assume he doesn't take it too seriously.

That leaves Gerson's third argument. He says a Giuliani primary victory would "place the Republican nominee in direct conflict with the Roman Catholic Church." This is because Giuliani's positions on abortion, stem cell research, and the death penalty are the "exact opposite of Catholic teaching." That may be true, but it is not an argument for why Giuliani resembles Nixon, a Quaker. It's an argument for social and religious conservatives, Catholics in particular, to oppose Giuliani. It's also worth remembering that the Catholic church ignores the departures from its teach-

Matthew Continetti is associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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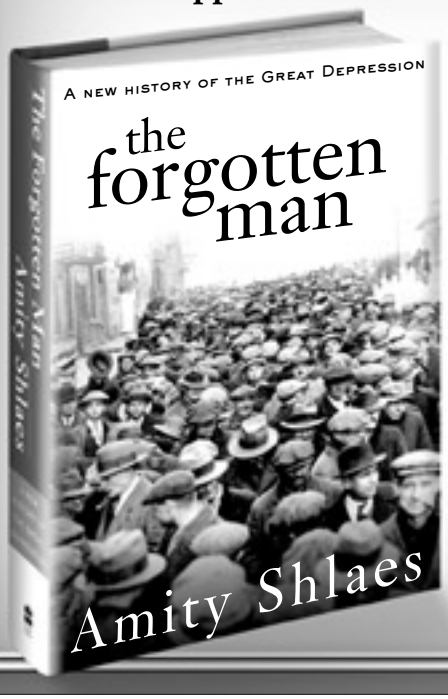
—GEORGE F. WILL



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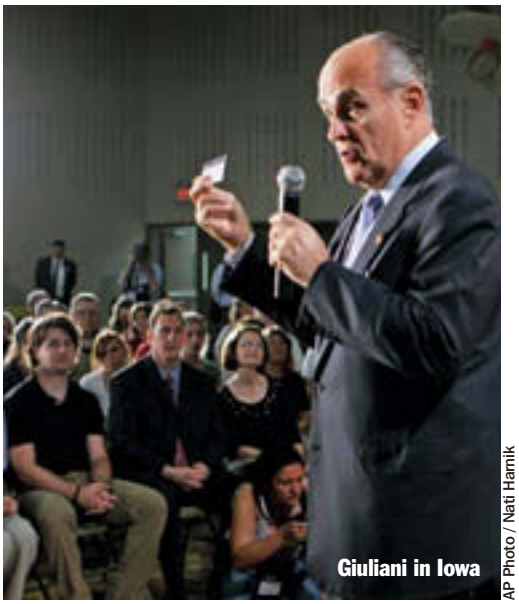
ing of Ted Kennedy and any number of Democrats far to the left of Giuliani on these issues.

In fact, on almost any issue, the differences between Giuliani and Nixon are profound. Start with domestic policy. Nixon presided over a large government expansion, creating new federal departments like the Environmental Protection Agency. Giuliani says that he would cut government, shrinking the federal workforce by 20 percent by not replacing retiring employees, requiring mandatory 5 to 20 percent budget cuts in all departments annually, and ending the practice of anonymous congressional earmarks. Nixon also instituted the first racial preferences program for government contracting. Giuliani was the first GOP candidate to release a statement praising the Supreme Court's recent anti-preferences ruling.

Nixon authored massive federal interventions with an eye toward short-term political gain. Regulations spewed forth from the Nixon administration, most famously his arbitrary reduction of highway speed limits to 55 miles per hour. He took the U.S. dollar off the gold standard, devaluing the currency and laying the foundation for subsequent inflation. He raised taxes. He imposed wage and price controls. He was willing to impose tariffs and duties to guarantee his reelection.

If you read Giuliani's many position papers or listen to him on the stump, you see that his economic program is pretty much in a separate galaxy from Nixon's. Giuliani would maintain the Bush tax cuts and seek to reduce the tax burden even further. He says he would work to reinstate presidential "fast track" trade authority, which allows the president to negotiate trade agreements directly with foreign governments and submit them to Congress for an up-or-down vote. He would sever the link between employment and health insurance by creating a $15,000 tax deduction for insurance and increasing the utility and availability of health savings accounts. Whatever this is, it is not the Supplemental Security Income program.

On foreign policy, Nixon and his national security adviser Henry Kissinger devised the policy of détente, by which the United States accepted the Soviet Union as a status quo power and abandoned attempts at Communist rollback. The most vociferous critics of détente were those conservatives, neoconservatives like Norman Podhoretz especially, who argued that Nixon and Kissinger ignored the Soviet empire's true aims as a revolutionary expansionist power and that a more aggressive U.S. stance was necessary to oppose it. Recently the Giuliani campaign announced its foreign policy team. Norman Podhoretz is a senior adviser.


Giuliani in Iowa

AP Photo / Nati Harnik

In his column, Gerson mentions that Nixon appointed Justice Harry Blackmun, the author of *Roe* v. *Wade*, to the Supreme Court. Blackmun found a right to abortion in the Fourteenth Amendment—a "loose" interpretation of the constitutional text, to put it charitably. Last week Giuliani went to Iowa to discuss his "Ninth Commitment to the American People," part of which is appointing "strict constructionist judges" to the bench. Giuliani told reporters that his model Supreme Court nominees are John Roberts, Samuel Alito, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas. Over the years all four have voiced concern over, or outright opposition to, the Court's abortion jurisprudence. Last week Giuliani also announced his "Justice Advisory Committee." During the Bush presidency, four members of Giuliani's committee—Ted Olson, Larry Thompson, Miguel Estrada, and Maureen Mahoney—have been mentioned as possible future Court nominees.

In his pursuit of power, Richard Nixon would often pander. "Pander" is not a word people typically associate with Rudolph Giuliani. Indeed, at a restaurant in Le Mars, Iowa, last week, I heard Giuliani tell an audience member that while he believes in God and prays, "I don't know if I conform completely to the teachings of any particular faith," and that "I'm probably more a student of religion than a practitioner of religion." The audience listened quietly, then laughed when Giuliani added, "I pray like a lawyer—I try to make a deal." Has there ever been a Republican presidential candidate more frank about his, shall we say, complicated religiosity?

It is clear that Giuliani's pro-choice views on abortion trouble Gerson more than anything else. And he is right that those Americans who have "been persuaded over the years to support Republicans mainly on the pro-life issue" may turn out to be "less impressed by a conservatism purged of pro-life moralism." (How they would react to a conservatism infused with Giuliani's moralism is unclear.)

No one knows what single-issue pro-life voters might do should Giuliani become the Republican nominee. Nor does anyone know who might replace them in the Republican coalition if they left. It's clear, though, that if Giuliani turns out to be the nominee, it will be despite, not because of, his consistent—since 1989—stance on *Roe*. But this would not mean that Giuliani is the next Nixon. It would mean only that he is one of a kind. ♦

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An Unusually Effective Minority

Bush and the congressional GOP embarrass the Democrats. BY FRED BARNES

The biggest surprise in Washington in 2007 is who's turned out to be the strongest force in town. It's not Democrats, though they control the House and the Senate. It's not a bipartisan alliance of moderates, who often imagine themselves as pivotal but never are. And it's certainly not a conservative coalition, if only because there aren't enough conservative Democrats in Congress to fill a closet at the Heritage Foundation. The most powerful group is President Bush and congressional Republicans.

But of course, you say. A Republican president and Republican legislators are a natural coalition. Except not in this case. After the calamitous 2006 election, there was no love lost between the White House and Republicans on Capitol Hill. Republicans blamed Bush for losing Congress, while he and his aides felt congressional Republicans had largely brought disaster on themselves. Full-scale cooperation seemed unlikely. But it's happened.

True, Bush and the Republicans aren't dominant. They're a minority, but an unusually effective one. One measure of this: At the end of 2007, there will be more American troops in Iraq than when Democrats took over Congress in January. Another: Democrats have momentum on no domestic issue, not even health care. A third: Senate Republicans last week defeated an amendment urging Bush not to pardon former White House aide Scooter Libby and won overwhelming passage of another that says terrorists jailed at Guantánamo shouldn't be transferred to U.S. soil.

There's more, much more. Of the "six for '06" bills touted by House Democrats, only one has become law. And that one, which raises the minimum wage, passed not on its own, but only because it was tacked onto the Iraq funding bill. Senate Democrats have fared no better. Majority Leader Harry Reid listed 10 issues on which he wanted action. His lone success so far is the minimum wage hike.

Republicans shouldn't get swelled heads over Democratic failures, though the poll numbers for the Democratic Congress are anemic (13 percent approval in the Zogby poll). Democrats largely set the agenda in Washington, can hold all the "oversight" hearings they want, and have the votes to block confirmation of Bush nominees. Every national poll shows Democrats are more popular than Republicans, and their stand on most issues is preferred. They are raising boatloads more money than Republicans at both the presidential and congressional levels for the first time in memory.

But in Washington, Democrats are stymied, foiled, and frustrated. Republicans have hindered or obstructed them at almost every turn. Last week, Democrats and the media were excited that Reid got 56 votes, four short of the required 60, to impose cloture on an anti-Iraq war amendment, then pass it by a simple 50-vote majority. The assessment was Democrats were gaining, Republicans and Bush crumbling. But on the next cloture vote—on the Democrats' most highly touted effort to force troop withdrawals—they got only 52 votes.

This doesn't mean the war is now a political plus for Republicans. It remains a huge drag. But Republicans have won the argument that Congress, before mandating a retreat in Iraq, should wait at least until General David Petraeus reports to Washington in September on how his counterinsurgency strategy—the "surge"—is doing.

Republicans have an inadvertent ally on Iraq—Reid, as maladroit a Senate leader as we've seen in years. His tactic of calling an all-night Senate session stirred more guffaws than favorable press reviews. His wildly partisan and often false statements have tended to drive wavering Republicans to Bush's side, instead of luring them to vote with Democrats. And his decision to yank the defense authorization bill off the floor after the loss of cloture votes was widely viewed as peevish and counterproductive.

Next to Iraq, congressional Republicans have had their greatest success in killing Democratic bills or stripping offensive provisions from them. Bush's veto, sustained by the House, wiped out the effort to expand federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. The House passed legislation to eliminate the need for a secret ballot in union organizing elections and to have the federal government negotiate drug prices in the Medicare prescription drug program. Senate filibusters shelved both bills.

From the energy bill, Republican senators removed a tax increase for oil companies and a requirement that utilities use renewable fuels like wind power for 15 percent of their energy. This made the bill so innocuous it passed easily.

Democrats held out for months against Republicans on the bill implementing recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. The White House demanded they drop the provision, urged by organized labor but not by the commission, allowing Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees to unionize.

Not only did the president threaten a veto, but Senate Republicans also said they would prevent the bill from going to a House-Senate conference.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell is famous for inventing the tactic of blocking a bill by filibustering the naming of Senate conferees. Desperate to claim an achievement, Reid finally dropped the TSA veto-bait from the bill, which was then quickly approved.

Bush and Republicans have formed a kind of mutual encouragement society. On spending bills, House Republicans organized enough votes to ensure that Bush vetoes of spending bills would be sustained. And the president has promised to veto all of them except the appropriations for veterans.

Democratic hopes for a breakthrough now rest with the bills to expand the S-chip health care program and to provide a bigger subsidy for student loans. House Republicans believe they have the votes to sustain a veto of the S-chip bill, which provides for ten years of health coverage but only five years of funding. (This means a large tax hike would be required after five years.) As for student loans, Bush is mulling a veto.

A reflection of Democratic disarray occurred last week after Democratic senator Ken Salazar of Colorado proposed an amendment to the higher education bill opposing a Libby pardon. It needed 60 votes to pass, but it got only 47. Forty-nine senators voted against it.

McConnell was ready with a stinging response: an amendment attacking President Clinton for his pardons as he left office in 2001, including at least one linked to his wife, New York senator Hillary Clinton. Before the clerk could read the McConnell amendment, Senator Chuck Schumer, her New York colleague, spoke to Clinton and she hastily left the Senate floor.

After the reading, Reid halted proceedings for a quorum call, returning 15 minutes later with a deal. He'd "vitiate" the Libby vote, invoking a rare procedure to erase a roll call vote from Senate records, in exchange for McConnell's agreement to withdraw his amendment. McConnell agreed, and the vote was expunged, but not before Reid and Democrats were embarrassed one more time. ♦

Hillary Who

Is there a Clinton in the 2008 race?

BY TOD LINDBERG

A miniflap recently broke out over a *Politico* item about a July 9 memo to "Interested Parties" from Mark Penn, Hillary Clinton's chief strategist. Penn's memo was definitely designed to foster an impression of growing Clinton strength. *Politico*'s Ben Smith went a step farther in his characterization of the memo, however, saying it implied a Clinton victory was "inevitable." Penn and Co. disavowed that characterization, and Smith subsequently took out the quotation marks he'd put around "inevitable" in his original post. Thus did the Clinton campaign find itself in the enviable position of having established its *humility* while pressing the immodest line that the candidate's "electoral strength has grown in the last quarter and she is better positioned today than ever before to become the next President of the United States."

Maybe she is. But Penn is subtle, and there were at least two exercises in positioning going on in his memo. The overt one was about the candidate's strength. The second, almost subliminal, was about—well, let's take an exhaustive look at the text's references to the candidate:

" . . . a good time to see where Hillary stands and why . . . Hillary's electoral strength has grown . . . Hillary has the strength and experience . . . Hillary's message: that her strength and experience . . . Hillary's support in the last few months has strengthened . . . as the candidates' name ID's have increased, so has Hillary's lead . . . just how ready Hillary is . . . each debate provides Hillary with another opportunity . . . Hillary's lead in the Democratic primary nearly doubled . . . Hillary's favorability has risen . . . Hillary leads top Republican Rudy Giuliani . . . Hillary leads . . . Hillary is tied or ahead . . . "

We'll stop there. I count a total of 36 references to "Hillary" or its possessive form in a memo of about 1,800 words. When Penn cues up the poll results against her Democratic rivals or the frontrunning Republicans, they are "Obama" and "Edwards" and "Giuliani"; she is "HRC."

Number of times the name "Clinton" appears in the memo: zero.

Now, it is not as if the use of "Hillary" began with this Penn memo. The campaign has often used the candidate's first name as a second reference to "Hillary Clinton" (for example, unsigned "campaign memos" of April 27 and June 22). And it has sometimes even started with "Hillary" and picked up with "Hillary Clinton" (as does an earlier Penn memo from June 11). Sometimes the purpose of deploying the candidate's full name seems to have been to pack some rhetorical punch. The April 27 memo concludes, apparently in an effort to be resounding: "Americans are looking for a President who will start from strength and be ready to lead from day one. And that person is Hillary Clinton."

What's new about the July 9 Penn memo is that the "Clinton" references have disappeared completely. I am almost tempted to say "once and for all"—except that if I were on the Clinton campaign and somebody wrote an article in THE WEEKLY STANDARD making such a claim, I'd slip a "Clinton" into the next one just to establish nyah-nyah privileges.

The drift is clear. The brand is "Hillary." The brand is not "Clinton." The candidate's official website is

Contributing editor Tod Lindberg is a fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of The Political Teachings of Jesus *(HarperCollins).*

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hillaryclinton.com. That domain name must have been registered long ago, and unfortunately for the candidate's current preferences, *hillary.com* is the website of a software company.

But if you Google "Hillary" with the "I'm Feeling Lucky" button, what you get is the official campaign website, and the campaign's logo popping up in the upper left corner of your screen says, "Hillary for President." Click on the button there labeled "Hillary" and you get the candidate biography, where you will encounter the name "Clinton" exactly once. It's about how Hillary spurned offers from law firms in order to follow "her heart and a man named Bill Clinton to Arkansas." Thereafter, he's "Bill" or "her husband," though in truth he doesn't much figure into the Hillary story. But she is "Hillary" and only "Hillary" throughout.

Consistency, they've got. If you follow the link to *HillaryStore.com*, the merchandise for sale there refers to the candidate only as Hillary (with an occasional "H," à la George Bush's "W" bumper sticker). The "Super Size House Party" pack ($185, plus $2 for oversized shipping) contains 1 baseball cap, 1 travel mug, 5 lapel pins, 25 campaign bumper stickers, 25 campaign buttons, 10 campaign rally signs, 10 yard signs with wires, and 1 pack of 20 balloons, each of which says "Hillary," none of which mentions "Clinton," except when providing the website address.

Walter Shapiro, in an interview with the candidate in *Salon*, found himself tied in a bit of a knot over the "Hillary" question. He inquired of the candidate, "Let me ask something that comes up every time I write about you. I sometimes refer to you on, say, the fifth reference as 'Hillary' instead of 'Clinton.' I always get three or four letters saying that I am demeaning women by referring to you by your first name. But your campaign materials refer to you as 'Hillary' and the word 'Clinton' might also apply to another well-known public person. Do you have any feelings about this? Am I offending you every time I type 'Hillary, Obama and Edwards'? Or do you have an open mind as long as I spell Hillary correctly?"

Essentially, Shapiro is concerned about referring to the candidate exactly the way Mark Penn wants him to refer to the candidate. But rather than worrying about taking semantic instruction from the campaign's chief strategist, Shapiro is worried about giving offense. And you had better believe that when people are prepared to fret to this candidate about giving offense, she will rise to the occasion. Replied the candidate: "I probably have more of an open mind. But I understand the point people are taking because if you also refer to Rudy and Mitt and John then that would be even-handed. I get the same indignation from a lot of women who read you and others and say, 'They never call the other candidates by their first name.' And I think that in print—as opposed to building a campaign that really does use my first name because it is so identified with who I am—that's the concern that people have."

It's not everybody who can be Cher or Madonna or Hillary. But let's get serious about the "Clinton" problem. Contra Shapiro, there is no plausible context in which referring to the candidate for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination as "Clinton" would create an opportunity for mix-up with the former president; in any discussion of the two of them, the use of "Bill" and "Hillary" makes sense as needed, but it is by no means necessary in most articles about her.

Rather, the "Clinton" problem is this: the set of associations the name brings to mind when people are reminded of it. I think the extent to which animus toward Bill is a drag on Hillary is seriously overstated: People who can't stand him tend to have a well-formed and free-standing negative impression of her as well. The real problem is the impression of dependence.

Mrs. Clinton is where she is today not incidentally because she married Bill Clinton, but for that reason essentially. It is no disparagement of her skills as a politician to say so. He merely opened the doors; she had to

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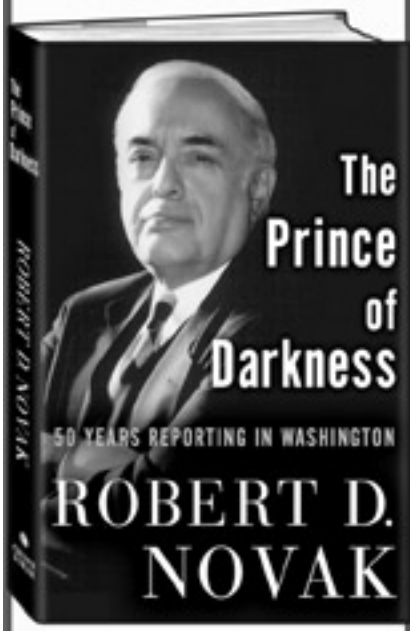

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walk through them. But open them he did. The Clinton campaign has every reason to avoid reminding people of the extent to which her political career and prospects derive from his.

The decision to adopt "Hillary" and drop "Clinton" has nothing whatsoever casual to it. It is part of a solution to, or at least an attempt to ameliorate, a genuine problem. Before her, the last person to face a problem along these lines was none other than the current occupant of the White House. The family nickname of the son of George Herbert Walker Bush was not "W" but, ahem, "Junior." That would not do. It took the political skill of Karl Rove to insinuate "Dubya" into public consciousness. (*That's what the real insiders call him, don't you know.*) People bought it. Penn is betting that they will buy "Hillary," and my guess is that everybody will be calling her that (and nothing else) in colloquial speech by November 2008.

It will be interesting to see if Republicans have the nerve to buck this trend—by referring to the junior senator from New York as "Mrs. Clinton." ♦

Trading with Our Friends

Congress is alienating Colombia and Peru.

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Congress seems poised to scuttle a free trade agreement with Colombia—and thus hand Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, the anti-*Yanqui* gadfly, an unexpected gift. In late June, Democratic House leaders announced that the U.S.-Colombia FTA, signed last November and awaiting congressional approval, would not even be considered until Bogotá showed "concrete evidence of sustained results" in thwarting paramilitary activity and curbing violence against union workers. Meanwhile, approval of separate FTAs with Peru and Panama has been delayed pending a congressional visit to those countries in August. Top Democrats originally agreed to support the latter pacts in return for labor and environmental concessions, but now they insist that the Peruvian and Panamanian governments amend their domestic laws before the deals can be ratified.

When he took over the Ways and Means Committee this year, New York Democrat Charlie Rangel appeared committed to hashing out a trade compromise. "I think Charlie has given a good-faith effort," says Republican congressman Ron Lewis of Kentucky, who believes Rangel was "held back" by senior Democrats such as House speaker Nancy Pelosi and Michigan's Sander Levin, head of the Ways and Means trade panel. Other free trade advocates take a less charitable view of Rangel. "He gets good marks on style," says Daniel Griswold, a trade policy analyst at the Cato Institute. "On substance, though, he's virtually indistinguishable from Nancy Pelosi, Steny Hoyer, and the rest of the leadership."

Rangel may be a free trader "at his core," as one Republican told me just before the 2006 election, but he is also a good soldier when trade rows become partisan battles. Such is the case today. Democrats allowed George Bush's trade promotion authority to expire at the end of June, and, according to one well-placed Democratic House aide, "There's no chance of a general renewal." Despite a personal appeal from Peru's president, Alan García, to act swiftly, the Democrats seem intent on postponing ratification of the U.S.-Peru FTA until after Rangel, Levin, and others visit Lima (the capital) in August.

Peruvians themselves are divided on trade relations with the United States. Indeed, their presidential election last year provided a microcosm of the ideological struggle now raging in the Andes. The second-round runoff pitted García, who ruined Peru's economy during his first stint as president in the 1980s but has since embraced more responsible macroeconomic policies, against Ollanta Humala, a radical nationalist favored by Chávez. It was the market-friendly center left against the antimarket far left—and García prevailed. "Peruvians want to be like Chileans and Brazilians," says Carol Graham, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. "They don't want to be like Venezuelans." García can be a valuable U.S. ally, should he continue offering a practical, pro-American alternative to Chavismo. But the current trade spat is not helping.

Even if the Peru and Panama deals

Duncan Currie is a reporter at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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eventually go through, as Rangel maintains they will, those countries are much less economically and strategically significant than Colombia, which sits next door to Venezuela and is the third most populous nation in Latin America (after Brazil and Mexico). Colombian president Álvaro Uribe, a center-right leader who is close with Bush, has waged a courageous campaign against the vicious narcoterrorists of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a leftist guerrilla movement now supported by Chávez.

So far, however, that has not helped him secure congressional approval of the FTA, which most Colombians favor. Democrats and U.S. labor groups tick off a litany of concerns, including the murders of trade unionists, paramilitary infiltration of politics, and the culpability of Colombia's army and intelligence services in various atrocities. "The members wanted to see progress on all those issues before there was an FTA," says the Democratic House aide.

But Uribe has made demonstrable progress on "all those issues" since taking office in 2002. He has presided over a massive drop in homicides, assassinations, kidnappings, and terrorist attacks. "Even on the unions' own figures," reported the *Economist* magazine in May, murders of trade unionists "have fallen to less than two-fifths of the number in 2001." The big story about Uribe is not that some of his supporters may have links to thuggish right-wing paramilitaries—these groups emerged before he became president—but that he has demobilized or jailed thousands of paramilitary fighters while concurrently weakening the FARC rebels and driving them into the jungles. Indeed, the only reason we are now learning the extent of paramilitary political infiltration is that Uribe's demobilization push has exposed it.

The situation in Colombia remains ugly, with drug money and violence polluting all sides of politics. Corruption continues to plague both the army and the judicial system. But the security gains achieved under Uribe have been truly historic, as has the economic boom. *Business Week* recently touted Colombia as an "investment hot spot." The two largest cities, Bogotá and Medellín (hometown of the late drug lord Pablo Escobar), which were once synonymous with Mafia-style mayhem, have seen especially sharp drops in crime and murder. Uribe remains immensely popular among the Colombian people. "President Uribe has done more than any Colombian president in recent memory to reduce violence in that society," says Griswold.

Before Uribe, Colombia appeared destined to become a failed state. Now its economy is roaring, its cities are safer, the paramilitaries and guerrillas are both less powerful, and its pro-American president is widely considered a domestic hero. This is an odd time for Congress to treat the Colombian government like a pariah. Should Democrats spike the trade deal, "It would just breed tremendous resentment," says Michael Shifter of the Inter-American Dialogue, and Colombians would rightly feel "betrayed."

Indeed, Colombian vice president Francisco Santos has warned that U.S. rejection of the FTA would be a discouraging indicator of "how America treats its allies," and might even force Bogotá "to reevaluate its relationship with the United States." More recently, Uribe himself vowed that he would not accept a bilateral arrangement where America was the "master" and Colombia the "servile republic." He, too, questioned the timing of this assault on a "loyal and sincere" regional partner.

U.S. lawmakers may travel to Colombia, but until then the FTA will probably remain in limbo. Supporters did receive an encouraging signal on July 10, when Senator Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat who chairs the Senate Finance Committee, publicly pledged to break the stalemate. "We are going to find a way to get Colombia passed," Baucus said. "It is very important."

Tell that to Nancy Pelosi and Sander Levin. ♦

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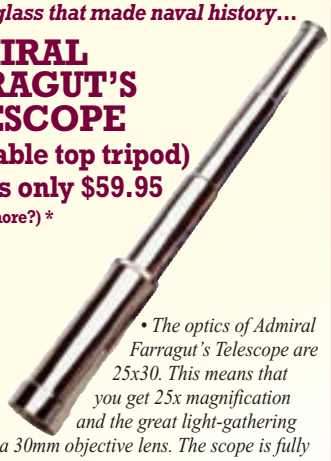

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Tough Americans

The inspiring stories of soldiers wounded in Iraq

By Michael Fumento

In the film *Home of the Brave*, a soldier who lost her hand in Iraq is asked if she underwent physical rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. "Yeah, Walter Reed," she says. "Talk about tough Americans." Tough Americans, indeed. When I visited that same ward, the first soldier I met was Sgt. Luke Shirley, who had stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED) blowing off his right side limbs and spraying him with shrapnel. "It kinda sucks not having an arm or leg," he told me, "but it hasn't bothered me like you'd think it would." I was dumbstruck. What kind of person is this?

That's why I visited Walter Reed's Orthopedic Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Ward in Washington, D.C., along with the surgical inpatient ward at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. (At Bethesda the men and women aren't yet ready to be sent on to Walter Reed or elsewhere for rehabilitation.) I wanted to meet these tough Americans and tell some of their stories. It was something I had long put off, because I go to war zones as an embedded reporter. I have no problem facing my own mortality for, as Ebenezer Scrooge's nephew Fred observed, we are all "fellow-travellers to the grave." But losing an arm or leg or eye—ah, that's another thing entirely. I believed I would come away from the wards feeling sick and more hesitant about upcoming embeds. Instead, each time I walked out it was with a feeling of elation at the attitudes I saw in Americans who not only refused to see themselves as victims but embraced their injuries as challenges.

Please note that at neither hospital was I allowed to pick interview subjects. For instance, while I asked for a female interview subject, and there were female patients, I couldn't talk to any. Further, there was an administrator with me at all times. Surely there were disgruntled patients in both wards at that or some other time. But the Walter Reed ward I visited was in no way implicated in the recent scandal, which concerned a completely different building, and I don't doubt the sincerity or veracity of those whom I did interview.

Michael Fumento, a former paratrooper, has been embedded three times in Iraq and once in Afghanistan and was a patient at Landstuhl, Germany, after a non-hostile injury in Falluja.

Sgt. Luke Shirley, U.S. Army

I got only a few minutes with Shirley before he had to leave. A member of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) from LaBelle, Florida, he was at 28 the oldest person I interviewed. He joined the Army in 1998 because "I got tired of having a normal job." A few days before Christmas last year he was on a foot patrol south of Baghdad. "We were looking for people who attacked our unit. I was lead and couldn't see much," he said. "Suddenly an IED threw me about 25 feet. I didn't know the extent of the damage until I got to the hospital. All I asked was 'Is my "stuff" still there?'"

By "stuff," the sergeant was referring to his privates. He'd lost his right leg above the knee and his right arm below the elbow, with lesser damage to his other limbs. But yes, his "stuff" was still there. And so is his spirit. I simply could not get him to keep a straight face when I took his photo. He was also enraptured with his wheelchair, called a LEVO combi. It is probably to any wheelchair you've ever seen what an F-22 Raptor is to a Sopwith Camel. "This thing rocks!" he exclaimed.

The goal at Walter Reed isn't to put people into wheelchairs but whenever possible to attach prosthetic limbs. These aren't the peg legs and single hooks of yesterday, either. Some of the leg prosthetics are purely mechanical and passive; others are motorized with rechargeable batteries; and yet others are bionic, meaning "a fusion of electronics, mechanics, and human physiology." Most of the limbs I saw had embedded microprocessors that can do such things as help maintain balance. None of these give wearers the powers of the Six Million Dollar Man, but they're impressive in their own right. Generally speaking, each amputee receives a set of three: one for walking, one for running, and one for swimming. They slide on easily over the limb and can be attached or removed in seconds. Each is adjusted to the individual's gait.

The amputees I met expressed surprise and delight with how technologically advanced their new limbs are. But what

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I found most compelling was the comment of Joe Miller, the chief of the Orthotics and Prosthetics Service at Walter Reed. He told me that while lower-limb amputees are sometimes given curved bands of carbon fiber called FlexSprint™, bands designed for longer distances, called FlexRun™, "are more commonly prescribed." He explained that his patients will "need to do a two-mile run for their physical fitness tests."

President Bush more or less gave the government's imprimatur to retaining disabled service members when, in a December 2003 address at Walter Reed, he announced:

> Americans would be surprised to learn that a grievous injury, such as the loss of a limb, no longer means forced discharge. In other words, the medical care is so good and the recovery process is so technologically advanced, that people are no longer forced out of the military. When we're talking about forced discharge, we're talking about another age and another army.

Both superior body armor and superior medical care have worked to convert the combat deaths of earlier wars into mild injuries or amputations. To date, the Army has treated nearly 600 soldiers who have lost legs, arms, hands, or feet at war, according to Lt. Col. Kevin Arata, a spokesman for the Army's Human Resources Command in Alexandria. As of late May 2007, he says, 31 have gone back to active duty, and no one who asked to remain in the service has been discharged.

A few have even returned to combat, including Army Major David Rozelle, who lost a foot in 2003 to a landmine while in a Humvee in Hit, near Ramadi, and went back to Iraq in 2004 as a Troop Commander conducting operations in Baghdad and Tal Afar. He's now working with amputees at Walter Reed. Seven other amputees have returned to combat in Iraq with another due to head back in November, according to Walter Reed public affairs officer Donald Vandrey.

Lev Nisnevitch / The Weekly Standard

Sgt. Luke Shirley (right) with Mike Corcoran, a prosthetics expert at Walter Reed

Lance Corporal Robert Wilson, USMC

Bethesda Naval Hospital has no rehab unit. Injured personnel there, who are generally but not exclusively Marines and sailors, are still at an early stage of recovery. One I met who has since reported to his unit, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, at Twentynine Palms, California, was 20-year-old Lance Cpl. Robert Wilson of Quincy, Michigan. When I met him he was sitting up in bed accompanied by his 19-year-old wife Brittney, who appeared to be attached to his hip. His mother, Dana, sat nearby. Wilson had a big piece of Styrofoam on his right

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Michael Fumento

Robert and Brittney Wilson with his "Swiss cheese"

arm that I remarked looked like a hunk of Swiss cheese, only to be told that, no, I wasn't just hungry, that's what it's nicknamed at the hospital. The large holes in the yellow material allow for ventilation and easy access.

Wilson decided to become a Marine long before he legally could, on that dark day in September six years ago. "After September 11, I sort of felt obligated to kick the shit out of the bastards who did it," he says. He enlisted in September 2005 right after his 18th birthday and married Brittney, his high school sweetheart, the following February. In the short time since he joined, he has made three trips to Iraq. Almost all Marines in Iraq are stationed in the Sunni Triangle province of Anbar, which has settled down recently but remains a rough and tumble area.

Wilson's third tour began January 31, 2007. His unit was stationed near the city of Habbaniya. "They call me the battering ram," he said proudly, notably still using the present tense. These are the guys who give residents about 30 seconds' warning and then kick in the doors before the bad guys can scramble for their weapons. Wilson carried a light machine gun called an M-249 5.56 millimeter Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW), similar to an M-16 but the ammunition is belt-fed and designed to accurately both kill and suppress the enemy. "Every day we got shot at, mortared, RPG'd [rocket-propelled grenades], everything else," he says. But Wilson was among the small number of troops hit by rifle fire.

Throughout history, soldiers have sought to fight from the high ground. In the cities of Iraq, that means rooftops. That's where Wilson was during a firefight in March. "We got into a 10-15 minute firefight," he said, "and my buddy called out 'Sniper! Get off the roof!'" he says. Too late. Wilson was already in the sights of a man with a powerful and accurate 7.62 millimeter Dragunov rifle. They only give them to guys who know how to use them. Wilson heard the shot before he felt it. Although it would seem to be the other way around, since the bullets travel faster than the speed of sound (in this case 800 meters a second), this is not an unusual phenomenon. Soldiers who might have been hit are told "Check yourself! Check yourself!" because they might not be aware of even serious wounds.

The round "ripped through my forearm, blew out some muscle and damaged nerve endings," Wilson told me. But the bullet wasn't through. It struck his SAW, spraying his arm with tiny bits of shrapnel from his own weapon. From there it traveled down and hit the side ceramic Small Arms Protective Insert or "SAPI" plate of his body armor, finally expending the bulk of its tremendous energy.

Wilson yelled for help and a Navy Corpsman tried to attend to him. (Marines don't have their own medics, using the Navy's instead.) But apparently the Corpsman panicked. "My buddy, Bjorn Hitch, applied a tourniquet to the arm," said Wilson. That's when the hurt kicked in. "It's a pain like no other," said Wilson. "They asked how bad it was on a scale of one to ten and I told them it was a 50." His one consolation at the time: They identified the sniper, who was operating from a car driven by another jihadist. "My buddies caught up to them [and dispatched them]; that's cool."

Despite the incredible pain, Wilson was looking out for Number One. But Number One in the Corps isn't yourself. "I told the LT (his platoon commander, a lieutenant), 'I don't want to leave.' You have an obligation to your buddies," he told me. "But later the LT told me that not only was I leaving, I wouldn't be coming back."

Wilson was medevacked to the closest military hospital at Al Taqaddum Air Base (TQ). From there he went to Baghdad, Balad, and Landstuhl, Germany—the largest U.S. medical center outside the United States—before ending up in Bethesda. He's not only endured numerous operations but says he will continue to do so indefinitely because the bone in his forearm will keep overgrowing and require paring back. Also, he says, "They can't open my hand here," meaning so far they've been unable to get it to fully open, although whether surgery plus rehab will fix that remains unknown.

Wilson knows his fighting days are over and says he will miss it. "You have so much respect for the guy next to you," he says. "But I've done my shift." Moreover, he has

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something new to live for. Last Christmas Day Brittney presented him with a special gift. I saw his daughter Neveah in his mother's arms. "I do plan to reenlist," he told me. "I want to be an aircraft mechanic at Quantico," he said, referring to the Marine Corps base in Virginia.

Meanwhile, he had to admit he was enjoying the attention at Bethesda in terms of greeting cards, gifts, emails, and the like. "People are here to thank you," he says. "It's kind of like you're a star in Hollywood. Everybody wants to talk to Hollywood stars."

Corporal Kenny Lyon, USMC

Kenny Lyon's work ethic almost killed him. During his second tour in Anbar, on May 6, 2006, the Marion Station, Maryland, 21-year-old and his buddy were fixing LAVs. These are light armored vehicles used only by the Marines because of their amphibious capability. The rest of the unit, from the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, was at lunch. The unit was stationed in a rudimentary fortification called Camp Hut in Karma, which lies just northeast of Falluja. While Lyon's platoon never saw combat, they took mortar fire twice a day. (Karma, as it happens, is the first place I was ever mortared; see "Back to Falluja," The Weekly Standard, May 8, 2006.) Generally, the enemy just drops in a couple of rounds and scoots before the counter-batteries can get a fix on them. In any case, after a shell or two you've had a chance to take cover. The first two rounds are what get you. It's what got Lyon.

"Apparently a round landed about nine feet behind me," says the three-year veteran. Even the smallest mortar shell in the enemy inventory, at 60 millimeters, ought to shred a man to ribbons at that distance. But Lyon's luck was not all bad. Said Lyon, "I remained conscious and I looked at my buddy," who was slightly injured. "He was looking back at me in horror."

The blast smashed Lyon's left leg from the knee down, ripped off the lower right side of his jaw, and blasted a silver-dollar-sized chunk of skull away above his right eye. His left hand took shrapnel and has permanent nerve damage. Echoing Shirley's comment he said, "The only pain I remember was when they applied the tourniquet." In Balad his leg was amputated just above the knee. A piece of titanium holds the lower jaw together. Broken bones in an arm severed an artery; he had numerous shrapnel wounds to the head and neck and both arms. Oh, and a piece of his tongue is gone as well although he speaks quite normally.

It took a long time before Lyon fully comprehended that life would forever be changed. "It didn't impact me until I got out of the VA hospital in Richmond," Virginia, he said. "I was sitting in my wheelchair, and I realized I had a lot of work to do to get back to being independent. And I had joined the Marine Corps to establish independence."

Told he might never be able to use his left hand again, Lyon had other ideas. After four months of therapy he regained some use of it. He still can't raise his wrist or move his fingers at the first knuckle, but he will undergo surgery to have tendons reattached. That's more important in his case than it might be with others because he plans to remain a mechanic. "I want to go to vocational school to work on cars," he said. "I love mechanics."

Lyon has also gone on a skiing trip with seven other injured Marines and soldiers, which is all the more remarkable in that he never skied when he had both legs. He also grabbed that promised 15 minutes of fame when *60 Minutes* interviewed him last year for a segment called "A Fighting Chance."

As did other GIs and Marines with whom I spoke, Lyon credited his family's support for helping him make it. "My mom was here every day," he says. "I couldn't have made it without my mom, my sister, and my stepdad."

Although the armed services are much more accommodating of wounded men and women these days, as evidenced by those prostheses that allow two-mile runs, Lyon's injuries are just too extensive. "I'd have thought of reenlisting if I could have," he said. "But this is a whole new world that's opened up to me that I never knew existed. I'm thankful for what I can do because I'm very active. I want to be able to run to know I can. This is the beginning of a new life and I'm going to make the most of it."

So ended our interview because Lyon had to get ready to go home to work on his car.

Corporal Dylan Gray, USMC

Cpl. Dylan Gray, 23, was on the other side of a sniper rifle as part of a Marine scout sniper team, although the Marines have a specific sniper specialty and Gray was trained as a basic rifleman. As a member of 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, he went to Anbar three times after he enlisted in February of 2003. His second tour came as a surprise, starting just five months after the first rather than the standard seven. It also began a very untimely four days before he was scheduled to marry. So he tied the knot with Kelly, now 24, in a civil ceremony and spent what was supposed to be his honeymoon time in the very unromantic city of Falluja.

In Falluja, he took part in the abortive first battle in the city, Operation Vigilant Resolve, in April 2004. At the time it was compared to the Battle of Stalingrad because soldiers scampering among the rubble made it a sniper's paradise. Marines were racking up kills at almost unprecedented rates. Gray referred to it with the usual euphemism, "a target-rich

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Walter Reed physical therapy room

environment." Said Gray, "The rules of engagement [specifically for those they could shoot] were less strict because everyone left was bad guys."

Gray, whose hometown is Genola, Utah, did right by Kelly in a church ceremony when he returned, then all too soon headed out to meet his destiny in the city of Qaim. Located about a mile from the Syrian border, it's an entry point for foreigners coming to kill Americans, Iraqi defense forces, and Iraqi civilians. The way they got Gray was the way they get most U.S. troops, not with small arms but big hidden bombs.

It was February 16, 2007. Gray was driving men from his squad back from a recon control in a Humvee. They were the fourth vehicle in a convoy. "We were driving really slowly, carefully watching out for signs of IEDs, when the radio crackled and told us a Cobra [Marine helicopter gunship] saw a suspicious truck. They gave us the grid [location on a map], and that forced us to make a decision. 'Do we speed up to try to catch these guys?' We figured that since no one had ever struck an IED on that road it was safe enough to hit the accelerator."

But there's always a first. It was the luck of the draw that Gray's Humvee hit the bomb, which is called a "pressure-plate IED" since it's not remotely detonated but rather set off by weight, like a typical landmine. It was also the luck of the draw that Gray personally drove right over it. "It blew out the tire and mangled my feet," he said simply.

Nobody else in the vehicle was injured. I asked if he ever had mixed feelings about that. One man in the vehicle, one vehicle in the convoy, and it turned out to be him. "I'm just glad nobody else was hurt," he replied.

When Gray awoke, he was in Landstuhl. "I don't know where they operated on me, but the first thing I saw was a Corpsman who told me 'You're in Germany and both your legs were amputated below the knee.'"

Said Gray, "I had like a dozen surgeries. The first five or six were to clean things out because IEDs leave a lot of debris," including pieces of tire in this case. "There was a surgery every other day." His brother-in-law informed Kelly, who was with him when I was at Bethesda. "I just wanted to hear from him," she said. "I was getting mixed stories. Then they flew me up here to meet him."

But it's not just his wife that Gray quickly found giving him support. "When I arrived there were 31 packages," he said, "including a portable DVD player and a bunch of other nice things. I don't even know who sent them." Several groups were behind the generosity, he says, "and I haven't stopped getting support from anyone." He continued, "I had a roommate from [Pennsylvania], and suddenly I started to get cards and letters from there. I was answering people from a state I don't even know. All the support is just amazing." He also praised the official support. "We have Marine liaisons, and everything we need they get."

Amputated limbs atrophy; there's no avoiding that. One of the saddest things I heard was about how the plastic sheath on the top of the prosthetic—the part that cups over the amputated limb—must be made continually smaller and smaller. "I do a lot of upper body PT [physical training], such as arm bicycling," Gray says. "They stretch my legs a lot, and I'm told that in a few weeks they'll start putting on prosthetics." He was clearly looking forward to that after months of being bed- and wheelchair-bound.

Having just finished his first four-year hitch, Gray reenlisted at Bethesda to be a drill instructor at the School of Infantry West at Camp Pendleton in southern California. It's one of the most prestigious jobs in the Corps, notwithstanding R. Lee Ermey's grotesque portrayal in *Full Metal*

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Lev Nisnevitch / The Weekly Standard

Jacket. "Still, I have a lot of things to think about for my future," he says. "I may stay in the Corps, go to college, or both." He has something else in his future, too. Within weeks of his injury, Kelly gave birth to their son Conner.

Sergeant Christopher Rutter, U.S. Army

An IED felled Sgt. Christopher Rutter, 22, also while he was driving a Humvee. Rutter joined the Army as an infantryman in January 2003, a few days before his 18th birthday. He chose the 502nd Infantry Regiment of the elite 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). While the 101st is no longer actually airborne, Rutter wrangled a jump school slot at Fort Benning (not easy for an enlisted man to do) and earned the coveted Silver Wings. It takes guts to throw yourself from a perfectly good airplane, but not the guts he demonstrated in southern Baghdad that day in May 2006.

Rutter's unit was responsible for various jobs, ranging from traffic control to "snatch and grabs." He was driving squad members to arrest a suspect. "I turned onto a dirt road," he said, "and there was an explosion on my side of the vehicle. I made a decision to go towards a wall rather than towards a canal, where the vehicle might flip." Turning was no problem. Braking was. "My platoon leader kept shouting at me to stop but I found all I could do was put the vehicle in neutral and ended up bouncing off the wall. It took about 15-20 seconds to realize my legs were blown off." The explosion had come up through the floor and through the door, neatly slicing off his right leg just below the hip socket and the left leg below the knee. "Nobody else received a scratch," he said. Fortunately, "We had an outstanding medic. And my buddies, they're the reason I stayed calm."

Rutter's first surgery was in Baghdad, with later ones in Landstuhl. When I caught up to him at Walter Reed, his prosthetic limbs were being adjusted, a rather painstaking task done with simple tools. His wife of three years, Amber, was with him. She recalled being notified. "The military called me at 6:14 A.M.; I punched a hole in the wall. Later when I spoke to [Christopher] he told me it was just a scratch and would be returning to his company."

A white lie, to be sure, but it's amazing what he has accomplished. He ran the New York City Marathon in November and has also gone skydiving. The first time he went home, much of his hometown of Clinton, Missouri, turned out to welcome him. They're now helping to build him a house. And he has big plans. "I'm thinking about running for state representative," he said.

"I was mad at first because here I was without my legs," Christopher said, in what was presumably an understatement. But as his physical activities have shown, he's decided that what you and I might consider an irreconcilable tragedy is to him going to be nothing more than a speed bump. "You do have to have a different attitude and take a different approach," he says, "but ultimately it doesn't prevent you from doing anything."

Rutter was my last interview subject. I folded up my notebook, put away my camera, thanked him, and thanked my guide at Walter Reed. As I walked out the door of the building I remember thinking I still wouldn't want to endure even having the tip of a pinkie blown off. I don't know how I would react in the situations these people had faced. But somehow, as I walked out of those wards of permanently mutilated young men and women, I felt *good*. These tough Americans have all served their country twice. The first was in war. The second was in demonstrating what is so aptly called the indomitable human spirit. ♦

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Iraq Is the Central Front

The Democrats are in denial about our struggle against al Qaeda

By Thomas Joscelyn

The leading Democratic presidential contenders have voiced a new conventional wisdom in recent weeks: The war in Iraq has little or nothing to do with defeating al Qaeda. Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama have embraced this view, as has the *New York Times*. It is dangerously wrong. At the very time it is being propounded, al Qaeda continues to fight fiercely to expel U.S. forces from Iraq in pursuit of its long-announced objective of establishing a safe haven there. It is a view contradicted by U.S. intelligence and by the repeated pronouncements of al Qaeda's top leaders going back years.

Oblivious to these facts, the Democrats insist: "This is not our fight." So wrote Hillary Clinton and her Senate colleague Robert Byrd in a July 10 op-ed. "Iraq is at war with itself and American troops are caught in the middle."

Campaigning recently in Iowa, Barack Obama agreed: "We cannot win a war against the terrorists if we're on the wrong battlefield." Pointing to al Qaeda's resurgence along the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Obama called for troops to be redeployed from Iraq. He promised that when he becomes president, "Nobody will work harder to go after those terrorists who will do the American people harm. But that requires a commander in chief who understands our troops need to be on the right battlefield, not the wrong battlefield."

And in the same spirit, the *New York Times* public editor Clark Hoyt scolded the Bush administration under the headline "Seeing Al Qaeda Around Every Corner."

This narrative is politically convenient for anti-Iraq war Democrats and like-minded members of the press: Public support for the war and the president has plummeted; most now believe the United States should not have gone into Iraq in the first place; and the Democratic base wants American troops withdrawn as soon as possible. What the new conventional wisdom isn't is consistent with the actual struggle we are in.

Just last week, the summary of a new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) representing the consensus of the U.S. intelligence community was released. It states that the organization "Al Qaeda in Iraq" is the terror network's "most visible and capable affiliate." Al Qaeda's leadership still desires to strike the U.S. homeland and "will probably seek to leverage the contacts and capabilities of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)" to do so. "In addition," the intelligence estimate notes, al Qaeda relies on Al Qaeda in Iraq to "energize the broader Sunni extremist community, raise resources, and to recruit and indoctrinate operatives, including for Homeland attacks."

These judgments are obviously inconsistent with Obama's belief that America is fighting on the "wrong battlefield." But the judgments of the intelligence community have been wrong before—witness the October 2002 NIE on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. So we should be wary of taking this latest pronouncement at face value.

The NIE's conclusions are, however, supported by a source that cannot be ignored: al Qaeda's two principal leaders. Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri have repeatedly called Iraq the "front line" in their war against Western civilization. Indeed, a review of their statements—readily accessible in translation in the anthologies edited by Bruce Lawrence (*Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*) and Laura Mansfield (*His Own Words: Translations and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*) and from other public sources—confirms that they have made Iraq their fight.

Consider what bin Laden said about the importance of the war in Iraq in December 2004:

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> I now address my speech to the whole of the Islamic nation: Listen and understand. The issue is big and the misfortune is momentous. The most important and serious issue today for the whole world is this Third World War, which the Crusader-Zionist coalition began against the Islamic nation. It is raging in the land of the two rivers. The world's millstone and pillar is in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate.
>
> The whole world is watching this war and the two adversaries; the Islamic nation, on the one hand, and the United States and its allies on the other. It is either victory and glory or misery and humiliation. The nation today has a very rare opportunity to come out of the subservience and enslavement to the West and to smash the chains with which the Crusaders have fettered it.

Likewise, here is how Ayman al Zawahiri described the war in Iraq in a letter to Abu Musab al Zarqawi, then al Qaeda's chief terrorist in Iraq, in 2005:

> I want to be the first to congratulate you for what God has blessed you with in terms of fighting battle in the heart of the Islamic world, which was formerly the field for major battles in Islam's history, and what is now the place for the greatest battle of Islam in this era.

According to Clinton and Obama, "this is not our fight." According to bin Laden and Zawahiri, the war in Iraq is the "most important and serious issue today for the whole world" and "the place for the greatest battle of Islam in this era."

Plainly, there is a disconnect. The comments by al Qaeda's leaders quoted here are typical. Al Qaeda has repeatedly told us that it has drawn a line in the sands of Iraq. Some in America simply choose not to listen.

Indeed, nearly six years after the September 11 attacks, the fog of war has descended. Our view of the enemy has become clouded by partisan politics. But our blindness hasn't stopped al Qaeda's leadership from reconstituting itself along the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan and in Iran. The organization still desires to strike the American homeland and continues to execute attacks in Europe. (The recent attacks in Glasgow and London, for example, had numerous ties to foreign plotters.) And hotspots around the world continue to flare up.

Let us be clear, then: Iraq is the central front in this global war. Al Qaeda has made it so. For that reason it is worth revisiting why Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri have invested so heavily in Iraq.

As al Qaeda's leaders see it, the U.S. intervention in Iraq was not intended merely to overthrow Saddam's regime and replace it with an elected government. It was further proof that the "Crusaders and Zionists" were conspiring against the Muslim people. In February 2003, bin Laden viewed the "war on terror" and the coming invasion of Iraq through this conspiratorial lens:

> The Bush-Blair axis claims that it wants to annihilate terrorism, but it is no longer a secret—even to the masses—that it really wants to annihilate Islam. . . . Nor can there be any doubt that the current preparation for an attack on Iraq is anything other than the latest in a continuous series of aggressions on the countries of the region.

Bin Laden warned that the conspirators intended to dominate the region and establish a "Greater Israel":

> One of the most important objectives of this new Crusader campaign, after dividing up the region, is to prepare it for the establishment of what is called the state of Greater Israel, which would incorporate large parts of Iraq and Egypt within its borders, as well as Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, the whole of Palestine, and a large part of Saudi Arabia. Do you know what harm and suffering Greater Israel will bring down upon the region?

Few sober-minded observers would agree with bin Laden's characterization. Nonetheless, bin Laden attacked Middle Eastern regimes for not resisting the conspiracy: "And what have the governments of the region done to resist this hostile strategic goal?" he asked. "Nothing."

Criticism of the region's rulers, notably Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, is an integral part of al Qaeda's recruitment propaganda. Bin Laden and Zawahiri continually tell Muslims that their rulers have been feckless in the face of the "Crusader-Zionist" conspiracy. Therefore, their only alternative is to join al Qaeda's jihad, which is the vanguard of the new Muslim resistance. The U.S. invasion of Iraq was simply the latest proof that the regimes of the Middle East refuse to defend Muslim soil.

Bin Laden explained that turning a blind eye to the American-led removal of Saddam was simply unacceptable:

> It is true that Saddam is a thief and an apostate, but the solution is not to be found in moving the government of Iraq from a local thief to a foreign one. Helping the infidel to take the land of Muslims and control them is one of the ten acts contradictory to Islam.

As this statement shows, bin Laden considered Saddam Hussein an "apostate" and an "infidel." He said so many times. It is widely believed in the West that this ideological difference precluded any form of cooperation between al Qaeda and Saddam. As The Weekly Standard has documented repeatedly, however, that judgment is flawed. In fact, as the war approached in February 2003, bin Laden explained the necessity of joining forces with Saddam. However distasteful, Saddam was still preferable to the "Crusaders":

> It is well known that fighting under pagan banners is not

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> allowed, and that the Muslim's belief and banner must be clear when fighting for God. As the Prophet said: "Only he whose aim in fighting is to keep God's word supreme fights in God's cause." There is no harm in such circumstances if the Muslims' interests coincide with those of the socialists in fighting the Crusaders, despite our firm conviction that they are infidels. The time of these socialist rulers is long past. The socialists are infidels, wherever they may be, whether in Baghdad or Aden. The current fighting and the fighting that will take place in the coming days can be very much compared to the Muslims' previous battles. There is nothing wrong with a convergence of interests here.

There was a clear convergence of interests in the Iraqi insurgency against the coalition. Neither Saddam nor bin Laden planned the Iraqi insurgency in every detail. However, extensive evidence found in Iraqi intelligence documents recovered by the coalition and the testimony of al Qaeda operatives confirms that Saddam welcomed al Qaeda terrorists and other jihadists to Iraqi soil in the weeks and months prior to the war.

For example, Paul Bremer, the former head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, explains in *My Year in Iraq* that a Mukhabarat (Iraqi intelligence) document he had seen "showed that Saddam had made plans for an insurgency." Bremer elaborates: "And the insurgency had forces to draw on from among several thousand hardened Baathists in two northern Republican Guard divisions that had joined forces with foreign jihadis." Iraqi intelligence documents similar to the one Bremer describes were released online by the U.S. government last year. One, from the top military command, contains the order to "utilize Arab suicide bombers" against the Americans. It also orders Saddam's agents to provide these terrorists with munitions, religious instruction, shelter, and training at the outset of the war. Instead of fighting a purely conventional war, Saddam clearly intended to confront American forces with an insurgency made up of foreign and homegrown terrorists, notably suicide bombers.

In February 2003, bin Laden predicted that such an insurgency would arise in Iraq:

> We also underline the importance of dragging the enemy forces into a protracted, exhausting, close combat, making the most of camouflaged defense positions in plains, farms, hills, and cities. What the enemy fears most is urban and street warfare, in which heavy and costly human losses can be expected. Further, we emphasize the importance of martyrdom operations, which have inflicted unprecedented harm on America and Israel, thanks to God Almighty.

Some now try to downplay al Qaeda's role in the Iraqi insurgency. But it is clear that al Qaeda—sometimes with the aid of Saddam's former Baathists—has executed the most spectacular and devastating attacks in Iraq. Al Qaeda's attack on the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad on August 19, 2003, and its destruction of the golden dome of the al-Askari Mosque on February 22, 2006, rocked Iraqi society. The latter attack plunged Iraq into horrific sectarian violence, which led many commentators to claim that Iraq was in the midst of a civil war.

From al Qaeda's perspective, these attacks are not intended only to sow chaos and wreak havoc. Al Qaeda has long-term territorial aspirations in Iraq. The forced retreat of American and Western forces is just the first stage in its plan for the post-Saddam era.

Since the last caliph was dethroned by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey in 1924, Islamist ideologues have repeatedly lamented the loss of the Muslim empire. The caliphate—whose seat was Baghdad for 500 years—had little real political power by the time the Ottoman Empire fell. But influential Islamists like Sayyid Qutb—whose brother may have taught Osama bin Laden and whose work is cited throughout al Qaeda's various proclamations—made the reestablishment of a common Islamic government and the imposition of their strict version of *sharia* law, rooted in the Koran and the Prophet Muhammad's sayings, a central tenet of their radical vision. Al Qaeda's leaders often hark back to a time when all Muslim peoples were united in a single empire centered in the Middle East, stretching as far as Spain in the west and Afghanistan in the east.

Ayman al Zawahiri explained the importance of rebuilding the caliphate in his 2001 screed *A Knight Under the Prophet's Banner*:

> Armies achieve victory only when the infantry takes hold of land. Likewise, the mujahid Islamic movement will not triumph against the world coalition unless it possesses a fundamentalist base in the heart of the Islamic world. All the means and plans that we have reviewed for mobilizing the nation will remain up in the air without a tangible gain or benefit unless they lead to the establishment of the state of caliphate in the heart of the Islamic world.

At the time, Zawahiri noted that "the establishment of a Muslim state in the heart of the Islamic world is not an easy goal or an objective that is close at hand." Nonetheless, "it constitutes the hope of the Muslim nation to reinstate its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory." That hope now lives in Iraq.

In 2005, U.S. forces intercepted a letter from Zawahiri to Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, the affiliate of bin Laden's terror empire also known as "Al Qaeda in the Land of Two Rivers" and "Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia." (Zarqawi was killed in an airstrike in 2006.) Zawahiri noted that he had studied the issue carefully and at one time believed "the center [of the reborn caliphate] would be in the Levant and Egypt." However,

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Zarqawi's "efforts and sacrifices" in Iraq were "a large step directly towards" the goal of reestablishing the caliphate.

Zawahiri offered a program of action for Zarqawi, with several "incremental goals" to be achieved in four stages:

> The first stage: Expel the Americans from Iraq. The second stage: Establish an Islamic authority or emirate, then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate—over as much territory as you can to spread its power in Iraq, i.e., in Sunni areas, is in order to fill the void stemming from the departure of the Americans, immediately upon their exit and before un-Islamic forces attempt to fill this void, whether those whom the Americans will leave behind them, or those among the un-Islamic forces who will try to jump at taking power. . . . The third stage: Extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq. The fourth stage: It may coincide with what came before: the clash with Israel, because Israel was established only to challenge any new Islamic entity.

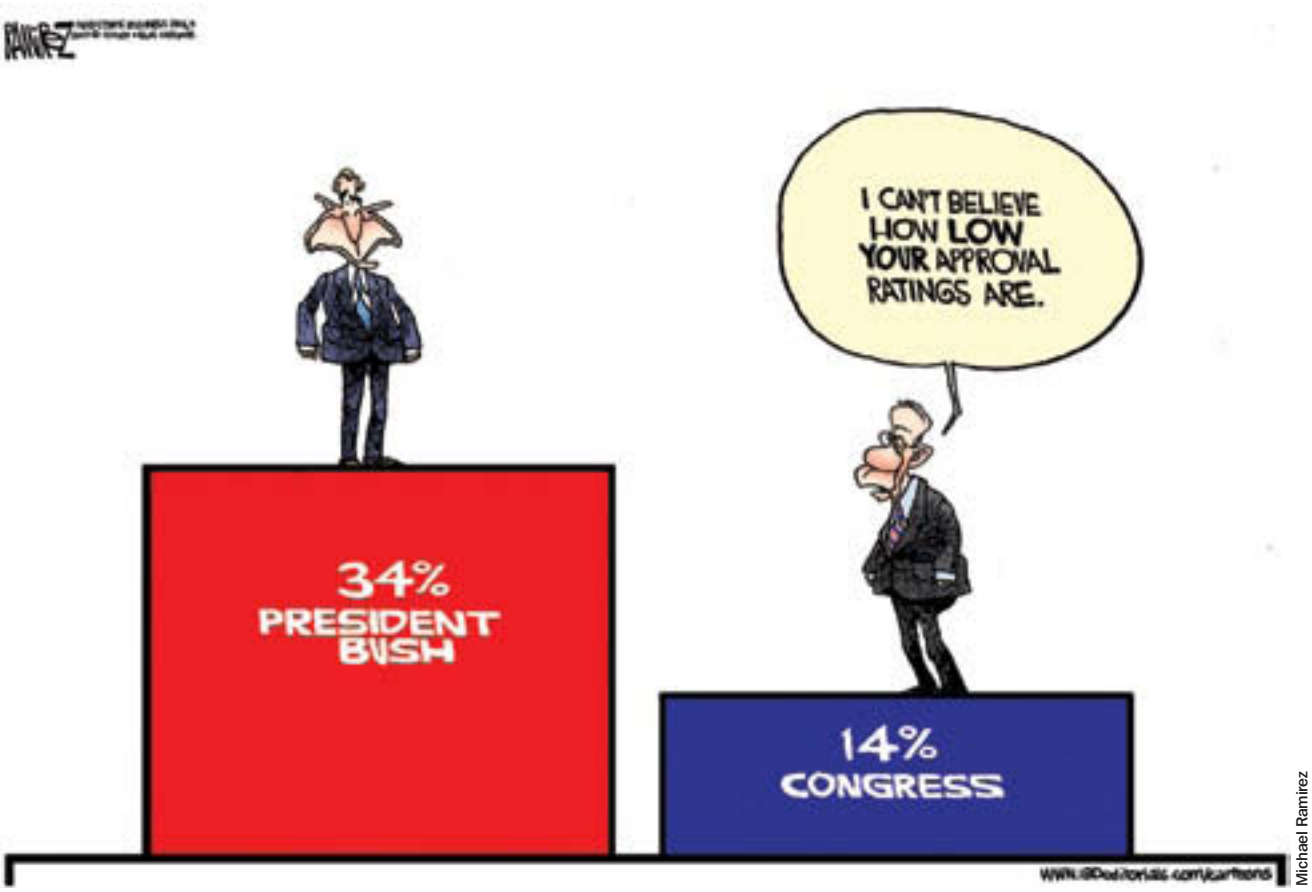
Al Qaeda's desire to establish an Islamic state in Iraq, based on Allah's divine *sharia*, was an important reason why bin Laden and Zawahiri denounced the Iraqi elections and the adoption of Iraq's new constitution: These ensured that, for a time at least, Iraq would remain free of the *sharia* legal system that al Qaeda and its allies implemented in Sudan and Afghanistan when they controlled those lands. As Iraq's democracy was beginning to take shape in late 2003, bin Laden scolded anyone who thought that free elections were the answer:

> Voices have been raised in Iraq—as previously in Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and others—calling for a peaceful democratic solution in cooperation with apostate governments, or with the Jewish and Crusader invaders, instead of fighting for God. We should therefore make note, briefly, of the danger of this wrong-headed, errant idea which contravenes God's law and stands in the way of fighting for Him.

Similarly, Zawahiri has denounced America's attempt to promote the establishment of freer governments in the Middle East. He scolded Hamas for entering the "political process" in the Palestinian-controlled territories. And he warned:

> My Muslim brothers in Palestine, Iraq and everywhere: We must be cautious of the American game called the "political process." This game is based on 4 deceiving things: The first one is giving up Sharia as a rule of law.

Instead of joining the "political process," al Qaeda has proceeded to set up an "Islamic State of Iraq." In so doing, it has sown discord within the insurgency in



Michael Ramirez

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places like Anbar, where some of al Qaeda's former allies have turned against it. This led Zawahiri, in a message released earlier this month, to extol the virtues of al Qaeda's new government, saying that even though it had "shortcomings" or was "something less than perfection," it was still better than working with the new Iraqi government.

Al Qaeda believes in jihad to the end. Bin Laden and Zawahiri have repeatedly implored their fighters in Iraq to be patient. They are confident of victory. "The mujahedeen fighters in Iraq turned America's plan upside down," Zawahiri said in September 2004. "The defeat of America in Iraq and Afghanistan has become just a matter of time, with God's help."

Al Qaeda's rhetoric is peppered with references to America's "weakness." Bin Laden and Zawahiri cite past occasions when America was struck by terrorists and simply retreated—Lebanon in 1983, Somalia in 1993. Just as al Qaeda claims its mujahedeen alone forced the Soviet Union to retreat from Afghanistan, so it claims they will force America to retreat from the Middle East.

Bin Laden explained this long before the Iraq war:

> We believe that America is much weaker than Russia, and we have learned from our brothers who fought in the jihad in Somalia of the incredible weakness and cowardice of the American soldier. Not even eighty of them had been killed and they fled in total darkness in the middle of the night, unable to see a thing.

In addition to slandering America's bravest, al Qaeda spokesmen have repeatedly questioned the resolve of America's leaders. They mock the idea of timetables for withdrawal and the belief that U.S.-trained Iraqi forces will be able to fight off the mujahedeen once America leaves. According to al Qaeda, America should withdraw from Iraq immediately in order to save lives. According to Zawahiri, Iraq is the new Vietnam:

> The truth that Bush, Rice and Rumsfeld hide from you is that there is no way to escape Iraq, except by withdrawing immediately, and that any delay in making this decision means nothing but more dead and more wounded.
>
> But if you don't leave [Iraq] today, you will most certainly leave tomorrow, but you will leave after tens of thousands die, and many more are crippled and wounded.
>
> And all of the same lies they said about Vietnam, they repeat today about Iraq. Did they not say that they would train the Vietnamese to manage their own affairs, and that they were there defending freedom in Vietnam?

Al Qaeda's leaders are eager to claim victory in Iraq. And should American forces withdraw, leaving Al Qaeda in Iraq a viable entity, we most certainly will hear victory speeches like the one Zawahiri prematurely delivered in early January 2006. Just over a month before, in a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy on November 30, President Bush had trumpeted the progress made in training Iraqi forces. He had explained the U.S. strategy for Iraq by saying, "And as the Iraqi security forces stand up, coalition forces can stand down." The very hint that American forces would leave Iraq any time soon led Zawahiri to taunt:

> I congratulate everyone for the victory in Iraq. You remember, my dear Muslim brethren, what I told you more than a year ago, that the U.S. troops will pull out of Iraq. It was only a matter of time.
>
> Here they are now and in the blessing of God begging to pull out, seeking negotiations with the mujahedeen. And here is Bush who was forced to announce at the end of last November that he will be pulling his troops out of Iraq.
>
> He uses the pretext that the Iraqi forces reached a high level of preparedness. But he doesn't have a timetable for the pullout.
>
> If all of his troops—air force, army—are begging for a way to get out of Iraq, will the liars, traitors and infidels succeed in what the world superpower failed to achieve in Iraq?
>
> You have set the timetable for the withdrawal a long time ago and Bush, you have to admit that you were defeated in Iraq, you are being defeated in Afghanistan, and you will be defeated in Palestine, God willing.

It may already be too late to save Iraq. It is possible that the current surge strategy will fail. And the war raging in Iraq—let us be clear—is certainly not "all al Qaeda, all the time," as some critics now accuse the Bush administration of believing. But the idea that the Iraq war has nothing to do with al Qaeda is demonstrably false.

Bin Laden and Zawahiri's own words tell us that the American project in Iraq jeopardizes everything their group stands for: These two top leaders of al Qaeda have promised the people of the Middle East that al Qaeda will protect Muslim soil from the "Crusader-Zionist" invaders, even if the region's rulers will not, and even if doing so meant cooperating with the "apostate" Saddam.

Zawahiri believes that Iraq is al Qaeda's best opportunity for establishing a true Islamist state in the heart of the Middle East. Democracy does not belong in the region, the two men say, and only an Islamic government based on *sharia* law is acceptable in Iraq. The mujahedeen will drive the Americans out of Iraq using the same tactics they used to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan. America's leaders and soldiers are weak, al Qaeda says. They are looking for a way to run from the fight in Iraq, and they will do so, bin Laden exults, while the "whole world is watching."

The whole world, that is, except the leading Democratic candidates for president. ♦

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Sygma / Corbis / Jacques Langevin

An Afghan mother and her three children, Herat

Understanding the Afghans

Rule number one: They're not like us BY ANN MARLOWE

As you emerge, moist-eyed, from this riveting story of male brutality and female endurance, you may find yourself feeling that you've leapfrogged a massive cultural gap, landing in a warm mushy pile of empathy with two Afghan women whose circumstances could not be more different from yours. Sadly, this feeling is a delusion. You haven't crossed an enormous gap; you've read a very well-crafted novel that makes Afghan culture seem peculiarly like ours.

Khaled Hosseini is largely imagining a culture he lived in for eight of his first 11 years, and then revisited in 2003. Telling his story from the viewpoint of two women—one a barely educated provincial, one a middle-class Kabul girl, who end up as co-wives of the same brute—Hosseini offers descriptions of Afghan housecleaning, food preparation, and baby care that belie his sex and show his skill as a storyteller. His tale is leavened with Dari words, but it is an American's account, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* reinforces a message Westerners want to believe: Afghan society is basically like ours, but for the flaw of gender inequality. And Afghans reason as we do, they just start with some bad ideas about women's place.

A Thousand Splendid Suns
by Khaled Hosseini
Riverhead, 384 pp., $25.95

Hosseini's first book, the four-million-selling *The Kite Runner*, was about boys and men, but the fixation of post-Taliban writing on Afghanistan—especially the most commercially successful writing—is women's tribulations. Asne Seierstad's heavyhanded *The Bookseller of Kabul* has sold impressively since it was published in 2003. Ridiculous propaganda like Ann Jones's *Kabul in Winter* (2006) raised the ante further. The well-made movie *Osama* (2003) took a fresher approach, with a heroine who disguises herself as a boy in the Taliban period. Meanwhile, it's hard to dine out in certain circles in the United States without meeting someone who knows someone who's started a charity to help Afghan women.

This Western obsession has more to do with our gender culture than with the specifics of the situation of Afghan women. Americans are notably uninterested in the very similar problems of women in other developing countries, including those much closer to the United States. Take away the headscarves, and the essentials aren't so dif-

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ferent in some Caribbean and South American countries. Many African women arguably have it worse, with a culture of rape and infidelity, and the AIDS epidemic both of these have fueled—not to mention genital mutilation. But the sudden explosion of interest in the oppression of Afghan women, in particular, besides having a prurient Orientalist dimension, is another way of advancing an anti-masculinist agenda with ideal villains: Islamic fundamentalists. It conveniently overlooks the fact that there are many Islamic traditionalists who do not abuse their wives, just as there are *bien-pensant* liberal Democrats who do.

Earlier popular novels about Afghanistan, including James Michener's *Caravans* (1963) and Idries Shah's *Kara Kush* (1986), written when Afghan women were much worse off than today, treated gender with a lighter touch. Michener even mocks the conventional view of Afghan family life, with an American anti-heroine, an early seeker after "authenticity," who rejects her Afghan husband as too liberal and runs off with a nomad chief. As in *Bookseller* and *Osama*, Hosseini's villains are Taliban, or Pashtun traditionalists. As soon as Rasheed tells Mariam to wear a *burqa* when outside the house, you know you're in for a few beatings at least. (*Burqa* is another instance of giving the Western reader what he's accustomed to; in 1974, this garment was known as a *chad'ri*, a Farsi word; *burqa* is Arabic and gained currency with the Taliban.) Hosseini's heroines have names that are easy on Western ears, Mariam and Laila, while the villain bears the thoroughly Islamic Rasheed—"rightly guided" in Arabic.

The problem with the recent focus on the hardships of Afghan women is that these are inseparable from the larger fault lines of Afghan society. In Afghanistan, connectivity is everything. The main flaw in Afghan society is also its main strength: The individual understands him or herself mainly as part of a family and larger kinship group, and not as an individual functioning alone. Afghans don't reason or feel in the same ways we do. Honor and the potential for loss of face loom much larger, and so does an almost visceral religious sense. I've seen a university-educated woman weep about her future mother-in-law's village-style manners, though she would be living thousands of miles away. It was a question of allying with a family of lower status. I've also seen a woman who prepares food for family members who ignore the Ramadan fast agonize over whether taking an aspirin would mean breaking her own fast.

These are the reasons there was no looting when the Taliban fell, why Afghans maintained their self-respect despite the fact that their recent freedom is "the foreigner's gift." It is also why it's difficult to get things done in Afghanistan, why doing nothing is better than potentially losing face by failing at doing something, why Afghan leaders grumble in private but fail to stand up in public. And it's why Afghan women are both chattel to be traded in marriage and respected, powerful matriarchs—sometimes in the same families.

But because Hosseini scants the connectivity of Afghan society—and treats his characters as individuals, American-style—his plot isn't realistic. Afghan women between the ages of 45 and 49 have borne, on average, 8.8 children, and the average urban household size is 6.6 people. Some Afghans I know in Kabul have almost 100 first cousins. Yet the three main characters here come from American-style nuclear families. Mariam, the rural girl, grows up in a forest hut with just her mother, seeing her father once a week, and seeing none of her maternal relatives. Laila has two much older brothers who are killed in the civil war; she lives alone with her parents. Tariq seems to be an only child living alone with his parents; he makes a visit to his paternal uncle, but otherwise no extended family are in the picture. (*The Kite Runner*'s hero, Amir, also grew up in an atypically tiny Afghan family—just him and his widowed father.)

So what difference does it make if Hosseini chooses to write about an unusual demographic? After all, you could write a novel about American life in which the main characters all came from families of nine or 10 children and it wouldn't necessarily be misleading about the culture.

This is true, but focusing on the situation of women, and making the central family an abusive one, is misleading without considering the protections the extended family provides.

Cultures come with their own problems, but also with their own remedies. When 14-year-old Laila loses her parents in an explosion, Rasheed takes her in and marries her without consulting any of her family. In real life, her extended family would have heard the news before the dust settled (the Afghan grapevine is amazing), swooped her up, carried her away to their ancestral Panjshir Valley, and married her off to a suitable Tajik relative. In real life, Rasheed's brutality toward his wives might have been restrained by his family, and his wives might have confided in sympathetic in-laws. But he never takes his wives to his native Kandahar to see his people. Anyone who's spent time in Afghanistan will find this odd.

Hosseini tells some home truths that take courage to tell, and which some Afghans need to hear—they bear as much responsibility for destroying their country as anyone else; the Communists were the first and only rulers to treat Afghan women with a semblance of equality—and some truths we need to hear: Afghans are as three-dimensional as Americans. Even the villain Rasheed is a complex character, capable sometimes of kindness, and a good father to his young son. Many Afghan families are warm and loving, like Laila's and Tariq's.

But besides depicting Afghan life as though the extended families did not exist, Hosseini also pushes a gender politics that owes more to San Francisco than to Kabul. Good guys are pacific, passive, "sensitive," and secular. Bad guys are Islamic traditionalists, read porn, and hurt people. The hero of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Tariq, has only one leg—I'm not even going to start in on the symbolism of that—and consequently doesn't fight in any of the many wars he lives through. Mainly, he endures. Finally

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a husband, he does what his wife tells him to do. So does Laila's adored father, an ineffectual, henpecked intellectual. Mariam's wealthy father is also a pretty weak character. It was like this in *The Kite Runner*, too: Amir, a virgin, marries an Afghan woman who's had a lover—a scandalous role reversal by Afghan standards. Not to mention that the morally admirable Hassan is a rape victim, the ultimate unmanning.

Hosseini is using his author's pulpit to foment changes he thinks Afghan society needs to make, and more power to him. But castration is not a very useful prescription for modernizing Afghan society. Few of those charities helping Afghan women recognize that you cannot help Afghan women without the participation of Afghan men. And Afghan men aren't going to buy into a model of masculinity based on the American metrosexual ideal.

Hosseini has worked out the kinks that made *The Kite Runner* endearingly rough-edged. The plot ticks along faultlessly, and there's a genuine surprise in the story line.

There are also lapses. Would an educated Afghan family be likely to allow their nine-year-old daughter to play for hours on end with an 11-year-old carpenter's son? Would a shoemaker like Rasheed use terms like "peaceful resolution"? Would Mariam, raised in a semi-feral state by her crazed, former housemaid mother have no trouble fitting into lower-middle-class Kabul society? Would Rasheed—in his early forties when he marries 15-year-old Mariam in 1974—be a physical menace in his late sixties to 40-year-old Mariam and 21-year old Laila? How many 70-year-old shoemakers are terrifyingly fit?

Hosseini is a well-intentioned, highly intelligent man, and there's nothing naive about his books. Nor is there anything deliberately misleading. But the reason *The Kite Runner*, the first Afghan-American novel, was also one of the most successful books of its time is also the reason *A Thousand Splendid Suns* doesn't do more than scrape the surface of Afghanistan's woes: Hosseini writes American novels that just happen to be set in Afghanistan. ♦

Four Temperaments

How medicine saw the human body for two millennia.

BY LAWRENCE KLEPP

It's much better being melancholy than depressed, much less depressing. If you're depressed you take pills, but if you're melancholy you belong to a picturesque 2,500-year-old saturnine tradition in which poets and artists were practically obligated to be melancholy, as were lovers and philosophers. ("I tried to be a philosopher," the long-lost schoolmate of Dr. Johnson told him, "but cheerfulness kept breaking through.") Melancholics also have an English classic on their side, one of the thickest, most eccentric, and most unread of them, Robert Burton's meandering masterpiece *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).

Passions and Tempers
A History of the Humours
by Noga Arikha
HarperCollins, 400 pp., $27.95

Noga Arikha's *Passions and Tempers*, a history of melancholia and the other three "humours" in theory and practice, doesn't meander all that much (Burton's final edition ran to nearly 1,500 pages). Arikha, who grew up in Paris and lives in London and New York, doesn't have, like Burton, a vagrant, hoarding style that reflects the cloudy condition she's writing about. Maybe she's just too sanguine. But she does cover a lot of spongy ground, turning up all sorts of strange medical conjectures, some of them supplying humor in the modern sense.

The humours were the four bodily secretions that determined health and temperament: black bile (*melancholia* in Greek), blood, choler, and phlegm. They were supposed to be in balance. An acute excess of one or another caused specific ailments, which were treated by herbs and regimens that promised to restore the balance. A chronic dominance of one over the others produced each of the four possible temperaments: melancholic (moody, sensitive, reclusive, imaginative), sanguine (confident, easygoing, sociable, spontaneous), choleric (irritable, hot-tempered, aggressive), phlegmatic (cool, calm, stolid, subdued). The theory was thus all-purpose, medical and psychological, a sanguine theory if there ever was one, and it lasted a long time, from its origins in the ancient Greek world around 500 B.C. until the end of the 17th century.

And as Arikha points out in her concluding chapters, it has recently been revived in more ways than one. The study of brain chemistry has led to new explanations of mood and temperament in terms of deficiencies and excesses of subtle secretions, while the vogue for herbal and "alternative" therapies has often relied on the ancient Chinese and Indian versions of keeping bodily essences in balance.

The original theory was radical in its time, closely allied to the emergence of Greek philosophy and the rationalism and naturalism that came with it. It was an attempt to explain things like disease and behavior without recourse to gods or spirits—to see nature and human nature as self-regulating equilibrium systems with their own laws. Empedocles and other philosophers had arrived at the idea that nature was divided into four elements (earth, air, fire, water), and since the body was a microcosm of the universe, it must be ruled by their counterparts: black bile (earth), blood (air), choler (fire), phlegm (water). Hippocrates, born *circa* 460 B.C., added empirical and ethical details, and the humours were off on their illustrious career, the fledgling medical profession hanging on to them for dear life.

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'Melancolia I' (1514) by Albrecht Dürer

Further contributions came from the 2nd-century physician Galen, the 11th-century Persian Muslim polymath Avicenna, and, during the Renaissance, the Florentine Neoplatonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino. Not to mention the quacks. Much of Arikha's book is devoted to reassuring medieval and early modern medical nonsense: Reassuring not because we've so spectacularly overcome it but because the confidence with which it was offered teaches us something about surefire medical remedies and theories in general—always irrefutably proven, always leaving town in a hurry.

There was a good deal of folk wisdom, accurate observation, and common sense involved in medical practice based on the humour system, which recommended things still worth recommending, like moderation and balance in diet, regular exercise, and avoiding stressful emotions. But most of the more speculative cause-and-effect explanations lapsed into lunacy: Women who were frightened by a black cat while pregnant would give birth to dark-haired, dark-complexioned babies, for instance, and the black moods of melancholia should be treated with white surroundings and food (opposites cure) or, on a contrary theory, by black foods (like cures like).

Standard remedies for melancholia and other complaints also included soothing music, baths, broths, and herbal infusions, plus applied leeches, methodical bleeding, "enemas and clysters, poultices," and potions, pills, and ointments made with everything from mint and saffron to turpentine. Some worked quite well, some killed the patient quite well. Much like today. The slice of Montaigne that she uses as an epigraph to one of her chapters should be displayed above the pharmacist's counter at your local drug store:

> Among all my acquaintance, I see no people so soon sick, and so long before they are well, as those who take much physic; their very health is altered and corrupted by their frequent prescriptions. Physicians are not content to deal only with the sick, but they will moreover corrupt health itself, for fear men should at any time escape their authority.

There are fascinating chapters on the Black Plague and its subversive effects on both medical and ecclesiastical authority (since neither doctors nor priests could protect themselves or others), early anatomical drawings, how modern astronomy changed the view of the body, the challenge to medical orthodoxy posed by the cryptic alchemical mysticism of Paracelsus, explanations of why women were more lustful and more "witless, maniacal, and frantic from love" than men, and Albrecht Dürer's mysterious, densely detailed allegorical drawing of a pensive bearded angel, *Melancolia I* (1514).

She has put so much into it that it seems churlish to mention what she's left out, but this is the sort of nuisance that book reviewers get paid to be. I was surprised that she didn't cite Ben Jonson's 16th-century "comedy of humours," which includes such plays as *Every Man in His Humour* and *Every Man Out of His Humour*. While discussing the melancholic vapors of the artistic temperament, she somehow resisted the irresistible art-history classic on artists' melancholy and madness, Rudolf and Margot Wittkower's *Born Under Saturn*. The most famous melancholy character in literature, Hamlet, is mentioned only in passing. Rabelais, a doctor by profession who made fun of humours (along with everything else), doesn't get through the door.

And what about how the word *humour* went from something medical to something funny? It happened only in the 18th century, and our civilization developed a "sense of humour" only in the 19th century. It was thought by the French and others at the time to designate something peculiarly English, something bordering on nonsense, which is what the theory of the humours itself always bordered on. But Arikha has made a good story out of it, one that reminds us how easily knowing a little can be mistaken for knowing a lot. ♦

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Unhappy Days

The cure for the Great Depression was addiction to big government. **BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ**

Bettmann / Corbis

FDR at a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, 1933

The "forgotten man" is a phrase with multiple echoes. The long agony this book recounts—that of the great economic downturn of the 1930s, and the measures to alleviate it attempted by presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt—has itself become largely forgotten, or is unknown, to most young (and many adult) Americans. At the same time, the Democratic party and its acolytes continue, 70 years later, to trade on the "progressive" reputation and liberal-left alliances—with unions, ethnic groups, and other special interests—they acquired during the New Deal.

The Forgotten Man
A New History of the Great Depression
by Amity Shlaes
HarperCollins, 480 pp., $26.95

But the allusion to a "forgotten man" has two edges. It was adopted by the partisans of the New Deal to describe the most disadvantaged victims of the business crisis: "the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid." This phrase, referring to the victims of unemployment, bank collapse, and agricultural crisis that 1932 Democratic presidential candidate Franklin Roosevelt proposed to help, was inserted by Raymond Moley—a pioneer of FDR's original Brain Trust, also now largely forgotten—into the candidate's earliest major speech.

In accord with that spirit, most histories of the New Deal have treated it as a benevolent revolution, which rescued and reunited America, bringing economic reconstruction and relief, institutional reform, and populist art to a nation badly wounded. Amity Shlaes, an economic journalist who has worked at the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times*, and now writes for Bloomberg News, has chosen a different perspective. Hers is a critical history of the Great Depression and the New Deal from a rigorous free-market viewpoint.

Shlaes traces the trope of "the forgotten man" to a much earlier and more penetrating usage. Some 50 years before the onset of the Depression, the Yale philosopher William Graham Sumner described the "forgotten man" as the victim in a paradigm where social reformer A cooperates with politician B to apply government resources to resolve the problems of person X. The forgotten man in the diagram is C, who must pay for such programs through taxation. Sumner described C as follows: "He works, he votes, generally he prays, but he always pays." Shlaes argues that while there is no harm in reformers and politicians aiding the needy, there is something very wrong in using the power of the state to harness C to the effort. In the words of her introduction, "Roosevelt's forgotten man, the constituent X, perpetually tangled with Sumner's original forgotten man, C."

In this telling of the story, stirring speeches and massive social convulsions take second place to acute observation of how the New Deal grafted an overgrown bureaucracy on the political culture of the United States. While the outcome of the New Deal was perceived as beneficial, and was unaccompanied by repression, it has long been observed that the emergence of the American social welfare state had elements in common with Mussolini's fascism, Hitler's state-directed economic revival, and Stalinist compulsory agrarian collectivization and central planning.

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Bettmann / Corbis

The NRA eagle, 1934

This important volume is, therefore, an encyclopedic accounting of attempts by many such "forgotten" individuals and institutions, some of them demonized in the reforming idiom of the New Dealers, to combat the aggrandizement of the state. Her book could be viewed as a reply to a standard chronicle of the epoch, *Part of Our Time*, published by the liberal journalist Murray Kempton in 1955. Although the remnant of popular memory in which the New Deal is still alive tends to associate it and FDR with grandiose public works, Shlaes shows that his predecessor Hoover, a conservative Republican but an engineer by training and temperament, had already adopted large-scale public construction and government intervention as means of economic improvement. The main incident in the narrative of the Depression and New Deal most often recalled today is the stock market crash of October 1929. For this reader, however, an episode recounted in this work has such resonance that it should serve as an urgent warning to Americans today: the passage in 1930 of the Smoot-Hawley tariff legislation, signed into law under Hoover.

That protectionist measure was authored by Senator Reed Smoot of Utah and Representative Willis Hawley of Oregon, both Republicans. The federal government had increased the public works budget to its highest level in half a decade. But farming was still a foundational component of the American economy, and excess production had driven crop prices to disastrous lows. The Republican party (and Hoover himself) were committed to protectionism as a general policy for assistance to the domestic producer, and even before the crash Hoover had pledged to institute a new tariff on farm commodities.

"Such a tariff not only protects the farmer in our domestic market," he declared, "but it also stimulates him to diversify his crop."

Even though farming no longer plays a central role in our national economy, the parallel between protectionism then and the wave of similar sentiments sweeping the country today cannot be ignored. As Shlaes writes, "America was in trouble." Like unions now, farmers were widely portrayed as victims in need of a legal shield along the nation's borders. The Smoot-Hawley act raised tariffs on imported goods to one of the highest levels ever seen in America—according to some, above any precedent.

Smoot-Hawley had devastating effects at home and abroad. The country had enjoyed a 15-year period, beginning with the outbreak of World War I, in which exports exceeded imports sufficiently to produce a $25 billion positive trade balance. Numerous business figures warned against the bad effects of Smoot-Hawley while it was under consideration. Thomas W. Lamont of the J.P. Morgan investment bank confessed that he had nearly gone on his knees to Hoover to beg for a veto of the "asinine" tariff bill. The European director of General Motors, Graeme K. Howard, cabled Washington warning that the tariff would so isolate the American economy as to create the "MOST SEVERE DEPRESSION EVER EXPERIENCED."

Howard, as we know, was correct. The new regulations would drive up the prices of imported goods, reducing the capacity of foreign companies to sell products in America and of their governments to accumulate gold needed to pay off debts to the United States dating from the world war. It would also block the sale of American products to badly needed foreign customers. Protectionism would diminish the buying power of the American wage earner while further enclosing the farmer in a pattern of overproductive inefficiency.

The impact of Smoot-Hawley proved global, and more disastrous than even its most serious critics had argued. European journals warned that such protectionist action would produce reprisals and, eventually, war. Retaliation came from many countries, including France, Italy, Australia, India—even Canada. In a somber tone, Shlaes points out that "at a time when the country could have pulled itself out of a slump through trade, Washington was buttressing the walls preventing that trade."

Still, the story of the Depression is, by the simple fact of Roosevelt's tenure in the White House from 1933 until his death in 1945, much more that of the New Deal's version of big government than of the errors of Herbert Hoover. Amity Shlaes has brilliantly assembled a panorama of individuals and events demonstrating the metastasis of the federal system under Democratic control. The most grandiose example of early New Deal legislation was the National Industrial Recovery Act. This law produced the National Recovery Administration (NRA), new labor organizing rights, and the Public Works Administration.

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The NRA, symbolized by a blue eagle, imposed minimum wage rates and hours of work on enterprises.

Roosevelt and the New Deal have been sanctified in American history. But many honest and productive citizens came forward to challenge the ambitious reorganization of the relation between government and the economy. Shlaes introduces vignettes of several such individuals. One was the Harlem-based messianic preacher Father Divine, who offered free food and clothing to the needy without recourse to state funding. Others include the owners of the Schechter Poultry Corp. of Brooklyn, a small firm of kosher chicken butchers prosecuted for violating NRA rules on working hours and wages, selling substandard meat, and conspiracy to evade the new regulations which, for chicken farmers, were oppressively complex. The Schechters took their case to the Supreme Court, which struck down the impositions of the NRA as a coercive abuse of the law.

Shlaes's wide-ranging gallery of outspoken opponents of big government includes some that will surprise readers: It is certainly enlightening to see Bill Wilson, the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous—usually referred to, semianonymously, as "Bill W."—presented as a pioneer of self-help without government interference. Aside from the lesson of Smoot-Hawley protectionism, there is another passage here that gave this reader pause. With the introduction of Social Security, Roosevelt commented to Labor Secretary Frances Perkins that actuarial studies had disclosed that money to run the program might run out in the future. Said FDR: "It is almost dishonest to build up an accumulated deficit for the Congress of the United States to meet in 1980. . . . We can't sell the United States short in 1980 any more than in 1935."

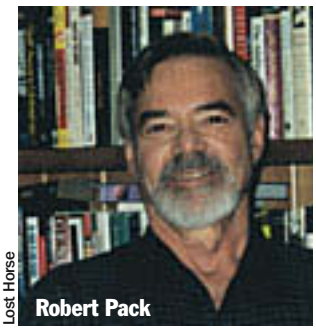
Let's hope that Amity Shlaes's cautionary retrospective on our country's most significant political development in the 20th century will be read and studied widely as the future that Franklin Roosevelt himself feared approaches. ♦

A Bard's Story

How Shakespeare dramatized man's fate.

BY AARON MACLEAN

The deathbed conversion can be a moment of comedy, grandeur, or disgrace, depending on who is describing it. One can encounter literary cases which are all three: Chaucer's epilogue to the *Canterbury Tales*, in which he seeks forgiveness not only for the sin of producing that raucous masterpiece, but for having written most of his life's work (save a translation of Boethius)—not to mention for "many a song and many a leccherous lay." There are also cases in which the author and his readers can differ: Many are the devoted fans of Evelyn Waugh who roll their eyes when Lord Marchmain dramatically concedes, very much at the last hour, that the Church of Rome shall be his salvation. And of course there are moments when the very lack of conversion—Socrates, philosophical all the way to the bottom of his hemlock in Plato's *Phaedo*—is the whole point.



Lost Horse

Robert Pack

Willing to Choose
Volition and Storytelling in Shakespeare's Major Plays
by Robert Pack
Lost Horse, 220 pp., $18

The conversion, as in Socrates' case, need not principally concern confessional allegiance. Imminent mortality threatens to alter the attitudes of all nature's rebels and fighters, whose causes and battles may or may not show up to be truly significant in light of the great approaching darkness. It is this theme, and Shakespeare's repeated treatment of it, that is the principal concern of an interesting volume of essays by the poet and literary critic Robert Pack. Those hammy moments of the Elizabethan stage when a character has a few words to share between the first spurt of theatrical blood and the last spotlit gasp are, according to Pack, charged with one of Shakespeare's principal insights into the human condition: that one's attitude toward fate—as opposed to one's attempts at altering it—may be the only true province of human volition.

Whether or not this somewhat determinist vision is creditable, either as a feature of nature or a point of Shakespeare's—and Pack's arguments are reasonably persuasive for the latter—these essays leave one with a desire to return to the plays, a little bit richer with insight than before. That is a basic but important point of praise, given how much literary criticism has exactly the opposite effect: Just ask any English major of the last half-century. Pack has no drum to beat, no politics to advance, no theory to impose, other than those points of interest which spring from Shakespeare's plays themselves. What a relief.

This being the case, one can forgive the fact that, for a widely published poet, Pack's essays have an academic steadiness that makes a serious interest in the matter at hand something of a necessity. There is nothing terribly wrong with this, for there is an elegance of thought drifting through the often dissertational prose. On a related note,

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Pack himself warns that he assumes "the reader has the patience to delight in the minute details of Shakespeare's patterns of imagery." So if you are not inclined to read a thorough unpacking of these sorts of things, then consider yourself duly warned.

If, however, you are, then there will be profit in Pack's treatments of *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* (especially *Hamlet*, actually), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and others. (The absence of any history plays is a bit curious, but it is Pack's book, and he gets to pick which plays he wants.) The inclusion of insight from reliable sources of literary theory like Darwin and Freud is not heavy-handed, and serves to illuminate rather than overexpose the texts. The treatment of the dimensions of Roman history in *Hamlet* and the Book of Job in *King Lear* is deft. Most worthwhile is the development of Pack's central thesis on Will's attitude toward will, a punning employed by the Bard himself in Sonnet 136, where he "egregiously" (in Pack's just description) plays on the meanings of the word, which in the course of the sonnet means Shakespeare's name, an inheritance, human desire, freedom of choice, and, if I might add one to Pack's list, spermatozoa. Go on, check line six for yourself.

This pregnant cohabitation of different meanings in "will" is, for Pack, representative of a tension present throughout the plays: That though our desires may not be met, we still possess the power to alter our attitude to our conditions, thus nobly holding on to one sort of will, in face of the failure to satisfy another. And when the dying Hamlet cries out to Horatio *not* to drink the poison, asking instead that he "in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain, / To tell my story" and Horatio accepts, we encounter the essential literary act—the act of storytelling—which is William Shakespeare's legacy to us. A character's epiphany, his acceptance of his life, in the face of the great wordless mystery approaching him, and his achievement of a sort of transcendental peace, becomes our intellectual possession with a little bit of time left still to struggle. ♦

Requiem for Strings

The salutary past, and uncertain future, of classical music. **BY GEORGE B. STAUFFER**

Why Classical Music Still Matters
by Lawrence Kramer
California, 251 pp., $24.95

The Life and Death of Classical Music
Featuring the 100 Best and 20 Worst Recordings Ever Made
by Norman Lebrecht
Anchor, 352 pp., $14.95

Cultural commentators have been noting for quite some time now classical music's fall from grace. The plummeting attendance at classical concerts, the abandonment of classical repertory by the major recording labels, the precarious financial state of professional orchestras, the replacement of pianos by media centers in middle-class homes, and the elevation of popular music and idolization of popular musicians (some of whom can neither read music nor sing it in tune) are taken as signs that classical music is doomed, and that it will not be long before it fades from modern life altogether.

Cultural shifts in Europe towards the end of the 19th century spurred Nietzsche to proclaim that God is dead. Is it time, in light of recent trends, to declare that Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven are dead, too?

Maybe yes, maybe no, to judge from two recent books on the topic. The yes vote is cast by Norman Lebrecht, well-known British music critic, who traces the rise and fall of the classical recording industry. To Lebrecht, the authoritative hold of classical music was broken with the arrival of Elvis Presley on the Western front and the Beatles on the Eastern front. Their pincer movement in the 1950s and '60s delivered a blow from which classical music—and perhaps Western civilization as well—has never recovered.

The no vote is cast by Lawrence Kramer, professor of music and English at Fordham, who champions the salutary effects of classical music upon the soul. To Kramer, classical music remains a Lourdes-like spring in which weary pilgrims plagued by the stresses and complexities of 21st-century life can bathe and find themselves restored. In his view, classical music is not only alive—it is a potential source of salvation.

Of the two volumes, Kramer's is the more substantial. The author presumes that the reader still has access to classical music and that he seeks more edification than popular music provides. And the underlying theme of the book is compelling: Classical music, unlike popular music, can enhance the quality of life. Listening to classical music is like working out at an aural fitness center: It not only provides escape from the tedium of daily activities but also commands attention, pushes the intellect, and offers insight and empathy.

How does it do this? As Kramer points out, the precise notation of classical music allows for thoughtful organization and manipulation of the text. Popular music presents good tunes; classical music develops them. With classical music, the fate of the melody becomes important. Melody, harmony, rhythm, and other musical elements are artfully arranged and granted substance. The music becomes a story in which details count: Characters (in the form of themes) appear and take life, plots and subplots unfold and interweave; dilemmas develop and resolve. Kramer believes that classical music deals with

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the fundamental choices and transitions of life: Loss and recovery, desire and destiny, forgetting and remembering, change and recognition. The listener takes possession of the tale and wants to know how it comes out.

Classical music also appears to have stabilizing qualities. Although the "Mozart effect" has now been discredited (a group of lab researchers at Texas Tech claimed that rats exposed to the music of Mozart and Schoenberg preferred the former, seemingly because of its calming properties and pleasing organization), Kramer maintains that the hierarchical structure of classical music helps to train the ear to listen deeply and perceive how the world might be arranged. As Otto Bettmann said of Bach's music: It puts in order what life cannot.

The vagueness of classical music only serves to make it richer, according to Kramer. It is often difficult to put one's finger on precisely what happens, but this only enhances meaning. Here the author cites Ludwig Wittgenstein, who compared listening to classical music to viewing the expression on a face: We understand it, but we don't decode it. It is the general nature of the emotion in music that gives it its power. As many historians have noted, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address comes from its nonspecific language—language that calculatedly transcends a battlefield in Pennsylvania to apply to the broader fight for freedom worldwide. In a similar way, Kramer argues, the battle for consonant resolution in a Beethoven symphony has the ability to symbolize the wider struggle for peaceful existence.

But are people truly engaged when they listen to classical music—engaged enough to experience the transcendence that Kramer describes? Modern observers commonly claim that audiences listened more intensely in the past, when they were not diverted by innumerable distractions. To me, the record on "the good old days" of classical listening is mixed. On the one hand, we have Mozart's description of an audience in Paris that heard one of his symphonies and applauded gleefully when it recognized the return of a theme cunningly delayed. That Parisians could follow the intricacies of classical sonata form without the aid of a Music 101 course suggests enlightened times. On the other hand, boxes at many opera houses in the 18th and 19th centuries were set up for eating and card playing, implying that audiences did not always listen with rapt attention. As Lady Henry declared in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "I like Wagner's music better than anybody's. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without people hearing what one says."

The Guarneri Quartet, 1965

Time & Life Pictures / Getty Images / Gjon Mili

If today's audiences are not conscientiously listening, there is still the chance that they are conscientiously looking. Kramer devotes considerable discussion to the effective use of classical music in film, from Disney's groundbreaking *Fantasia* through *Brief Encounter* and *People Will Talk* to such recent movies as *Paradise Road* and *Impromptu*. His appraisal of the Prelude from Bach's G-Major Cello Suite in the soundtracks of *Master and Commander* and *The Pianist* is masterful and shows how classical music can add both nuance and new meaning to the cinematographic image. In film, the life-enhancing social energy of classical music forms a convincing partnership, one that proves effective even in campier productions. Would the restoration of Superman's powers after his encounter with kryptonite feel as strong if it were not accompanied by the return of the heroic main theme in John Williams's stunning score?

While Kramer is convinced that classical music still has the right stuff, Lebrecht would say it doesn't matter, since the recording industry that carried the great masterpieces to a broad audience has changed priorities. Lebrecht begins with the first recordings of classical music by Enrico Caruso in 1902. Short, stout, and not particularly handsome, Caruso was an unlikely operatic superstar, but his penetrating tenor voice with its dark, baritone-like timbre carried through the pop and crackle of the early cylinders and 78s. His renditions of Verdi and Puccini convinced listeners that the gramophone was not just a gimmick. By his death in 1921, Caruso had earned more than $2 million from his recordings—more than Babe Ruth could boast in his famous salary face-off with President Hoover. Equally improbable was Wilhelm Kempff, a solid but lackluster pianist whose career blossomed on the basis of recordings rather than concerts.

By the mid-1920s, the recording industry was moving forward at full steam, fueled by its recordings of classical music. In 1926 RCA Victor sold $20 million worth of Victrola players in one week alone, and by 1929, annual classical record sales totaled $104 million. Following the stock market crash, this figure plummeted to $6 million. But with RCA and Columbia in the United States competing against EMI and Decca in Britain and DGG and

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Telefunken in Germany, the recording industry steadily revived and prospered though the 1940s. With the switch from the 78 to the long-playing album in 1948, classical music entered a golden age of recording. The introduction of magnetic tape in the 1950s opened the door to studio editing and the manipulation of the recorded sound.

In early times a wealthy patron could bring Handel and Scarlatti, Bach and Marchand, or Chopin and Liszt together for a match-up of skills. By the middle of the 20th century any middle-class citizen could sit in his home and compare Kempff and Backhaus, Heifetz and Milstein, or Rachmaninoff and Horowitz. Arthur Schnabel's cycle of Beethoven sonatas, although riddled with technical slips, nevertheless became a cultural marker, a reference tool as necessary in one's personal library as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* or the *World Book*. Recordings also led to the rise of star conductors—Toscanini, Walter, Klemperer, von Karajan, and others—whose albums took them far beyond their local cities, Lebrecht points out.

Elvis Presley's arrival in 1955 changed everything. Within one year his record sales topped $22 million—half as much as the entire classical market. EMI saw the writing on the wall and began to judge classical recordings on profitability. Adolescents soon became the main drivers of the recording industry: They had the money to spend on records, and they, not media moguls, became the arbiters of taste. Lebrecht's numbers tell it all: Arthur Rubenstein's 1956 recording of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto sold 350,000 copies; his 1971 remake of the same piece sold 20,000 copies. Big names no longer spelled pay dirt (as Lebrecht puts it) and the reign of the classical performer had come to an end.

This is not to say that there was no market whatsoever. Solti's recording of Wagner's *Ring*, made in 1958-1965, has managed to sell 18 million copies, and von Karajan's orchestral recordings weigh in at 200 million sales and counting. (Pavarotti is second on Lebrecht's all-time artist list, with 100 million sales.) Ironically the compact disk, with its brilliant sound, portability, and low production costs has proven to be the coup de grâce for the classical record industry: Easily pirated through digital means, it is as often dispensed as a souvenir or promotional gift as cherished in one's library.

In Lebrecht's view, overproduction of a limited number of masterpieces (435 different versions of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, for instance), corporate pragmatism, competition from television and other media, and the lack of convincing new music have added to the problem. A home collection of classical music, carefully assembled through reading reviews and browsing in stores, is no longer necessary; one simply surfs, clicks, and downloads. Lebrecht closes his eulogy with an annotated catalog of the 100 best and 20 worst classical recordings in history.

But wait! Like Mark Twain's premature obituary, the reports of classical music's demise may be an exaggeration. Before signing off, Lebrecht notes that, in May 2005, the BBC placed an in-house recording of Beethoven's nine symphonies on the web for a week, allowing listeners to download the music free of charge. The expectation was a thousand takers. When the files were in, however, the result was an astonishing 1.4 million downloads! The largest group of listeners—approximately 40 percent of the total—stemmed from the United States and United Kingdom, as might be expected. But there were also healthy contingents from Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, and other non-Western countries, a fact that points to the emergence of new, global audiences.

Thus Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven may not be dead, after all. Still, it is difficult to know whether the BBC listeners were seeking the transcendence described by Kramer or simply looking for cultural *chachkas* to complement the Dave Matthews and Christina Aguilera tunes that already crowd the megabytes of today's iPods. ♦

Queens of Comedy

And you thought Franklin Pangborn was dead.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Despite what you may once have read in my Wikipedia entry (since edited, though not by me), I am not gay. However, according to an astonishingly dreadful new comedy called *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, I simply must be—because I like show tunes and know how to tap-dance a little.

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry
Directed by Dennis Dugan

In the universe according to *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, all gay males like show tunes. Gay males also flit about like Tinker Bell, cry like a six-year-old when confronted with someone yelling nasty things at them, speak the word "fabulous" at every opportunity, and dance naked in the shower to "I'm Every Woman" by Whitney Houston.

Heterosexual males, by contrast, (a) buy lots of porn, (b) throw hamburger patties on top of spaghetti and call it Bolognese, (c) play lots of basketball, and (d) punch, head-butt, and body-slam people who annoy them.

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry grew out of a potentially clever comic conceit: Circumstances compel two aggressively straight New York

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City firemen to enter into a fake gay marriage, and then force them to make it look real so that they don't go to jail on fraud charges.

But between the idea and the reality fell the shadow—the shadow of the gay cliché. You haven't seen men mincing like this since the 1930s, when a secondary player named Franklin Pangborn enlivened many a screwball comedy with his patented "pansy" character. Or since Jack Benny tangled repeatedly with store clerk Frank Nelson, who always turned on his heel and responded to Benny's request for help with a lilting "Yeeeeeeessssssssssssss?"

Like all comic clichés, the gay cliché is funny if you build on the template and do something unexpected with it. But there isn't a nanosecond of originality or cleverness in *Chuck and Larry*. It's not just homosexuals who are defamed here; the portrait of straight guys is head-scratchingly stupid and obvious, too. Adam Sandler is Chuck, a "male whore" who sleeps with twin sisters seriatim on the same day and needs a bottle of tequila and Cinemax to get to sleep at night. Kevin James is Larry, the widowed family man who eats Duncan Hines frosting straight from the container and worries about his 10-year-old son's preference for musicals over the Mets.

They don't have a clue how to act gay, which doesn't keep their union from becoming a cause célèbre or keep them from becoming heroes for beating up gay bashers. Chuck falls in love with the lawyer (Jessica Biel) they hire to protect them from the fraud inspectors. Since she thinks he's a queer activist—which ensures her a place in the Movie Moron Hall of Fame—she allows him to see her unclothed and to fondle her breasts ("See, they're real," she says). As for Larry, he yells at his fellow firemen for being homophobic in their rejection of Chuck, even though he knows that Chuck isn't actually gay. So figure that one out.

We have the beautiful lawyer telling Chuck she wants to have a "girls day" with him, and then asking him to confide in her because "we're both girls." We have a costume party with men dressed in fairy costumes, and a

Kevin James, Adam Sandler

Universal

climactic courtroom hearing where the lawyer's gay brother rises from his chair and screams, "You go, girls!"

Everybody involved with this movie is in show business, the most gay-friendly profession in the world. Therefore, everybody in this movie knows, has worked with, and has palled around with homosexuals. And yet it offers a portrait of gay life that seems to have been assembled by people who aren't quite sure whether that nice young man Paul Lynde is "one of them" or just needs to meet a nice lady.

This makes it all the more shocking that two of the screenplay's credited authors are Jim Taylor and Alexander Payne, the sophisticated and heartfelt satirists who collaborated on *Election*, *About Schmidt*, and *Sideways*—three of the best and most socially exact comedies of the past decade.

What's not shocking is that the movie is directed by Dennis Dugan, who was an intensely annoying actor 30 years ago when he played James Rockford's boyish rival Richie Brockelman on *The Rockford Files* and is quite possibly the worst director of comedy in the world today. Inexplicably, the terrifically talented Sandler loves to work with Dennis Dugan. He really shouldn't.

If a movie written by, directed by, and starring straight people stuffed with the sorts of jokes which pop up every few seconds in *Chuck and Larry* had been released 25 years ago, it would have been the subject of enraged pieces by militantly gay movie critics in the *Village Voice*, and very possibly the object of a boycott. But something has happened in the intervening decades. Gay humor—very low gay humor—has become widely accepted and acceptable because it has been imported into the mainstream not by maniacal Christians hostile to the gay rights agenda, but by homosexuals themselves.

Will and Grace, a television program written and produced by one gay man, brought Franklin Pangborn's pansy back to life in the person of Sean Hayes's Jack. *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, a cable sensation a few years back, embraced the notion that gay men have some supernatural ability to match colors and pick clothing.

And the hilarious plays and essays of gay activist Paul Rudnick are exercises in cultural stereotyping, as in his *New Yorker* piece two years ago offering a new look at the "intelligent design" of the universe:

"Day No. 1: And the Lord God said, 'Let there be light,' and lo, there was light. But then the Lord God said, 'Wait, what if I make it a sort of rosy, sunset-at-the-beach, filtered half-light, so that everything else I design will look younger?'

"'I'm loving that,' said Buddha. 'It's new.'

"'You should design a restaurant,' added Allah."

Now that's funny. ♦

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Parody

"Democrats rolled out cots and ordered pizzas as they settled in for a marathon Senate debate on Iraq last night that featured numerous speeches but little chance of getting any closer to resolving the stalemate over how to end the war" **—The Washington Post, *July 18***

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and yield to my distinguished colleague from the great state of West Virginia, at 89 years young the senior member of this body, who has much experience with these marathon sessions. I am thinking now of the great debates of the late 1950s and early 60s, when the voice of the distinguished senator from West Virginia—whose love for the Constitution is as great as his love for this body—was first heard on this floor.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, with all the strength that I have, and with all the fiber that is in my being, I rise to express my outrage, and my steadfast opposition, to what this President and his minions are doing to tear apart the social fabric of our country and our Constitution—and all in the name of a so-called "war on terror."

You will forgive me, Mr. President, if I consult my notes. If I can find my notes. Mr. President, I regret to tell the Senate that I do not have my notes.

But let me resume: I say to you, Mr. President, and to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, that the fact is that the Negro people of this country lead longer, healthier, happier lives in the United States of America than their brethren in any other parts of the world—especially those unfortunate millions now inhabiting deepest, darkest Africa. I tell you there can be no doubt that if the President and his minions have their way, if the United States Senate adopts this scurrilous, so-called "civil rights" legislation—I trust that the clerk will put "civil rights" in quotation marks—that will not only upset the delicate social balance between the races in my part of the country, but will needlessly injure, and probably destroy with one stroke of the pen, the harmony and goodwill that has characterized relations between the good Negro citizens and the white citizens not only of my beloved West Virginia, but of the rest of the South, and the rest of the country!

I implore the President and his minions: Do not do this to our good Negro citizens! It says right here in the Constitution—I am quoting now, Mr. President—that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." That's the Tenth Amendment, Mr. President—an amendment that is as precious to the good Negro people of the state of West Virginia as it is to those people across this land,

the weekly Standard
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